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Warnings Unheeded: Twin Tragedies At Fairchild Air Force Base



Synopsis

The true story of two separate mass-casualty incidents that occurred within days of each other at a US Air Force base. Using the words of the people who experienced the tragedies, the book provides an in-depth look at the before, during and after of a preventable "active shooter" incident and an avoidable fatal plane crash. In one tragic week at Fairchild Air Force Base, an "active shooter" terrorized the base hospital and a talented but reckless pilot crashed a B-52 bomber near the flight line. Both fatal tragedies had been repeatedly predicted by numerous airmen and mental health professionals. In "vivid and thoroughly researched detail" *Warnings Unheeded* delivers an unprecedented, revealing look at the events that led to the twin tragedies. The book follows an "active shooter" as he progresses toward his crime and dispels the myth that these incidents are random acts of violence committed without warning by otherwise normal individuals. In a parallel account, *Warnings Unheeded* tells the story of a veteran pilot who was known for exceeding the maneuvering limits of his B-52 bomber. His reckless flying not only put the lives of his crew at risk, but also the lives of the air show spectators who gathered to watch him perform. When attempts to ground the pilot were unsuccessful, several aviators refused to fly with him and "predicted the worst air show disaster in history." *Warnings Unheeded* is a unique true crime book authored by Andy Brown, the man who ended the hospital killing spree, and is a result of more than seven years of writing and research. Brown "masterfully weaves" the stories together and intersperses them with chapters revealing the preparations he made that enabled him to end a pistol-versus-rifle gunfight with a 70 yard shot from his handgun. Brown also writes of his experience with the aftermath of the shooting and encourages others to learn from his mistakes when it comes to dealing with the effects of trauma. These empowering stories are exhaustively researched and presented in an objective, narrative style that shows what can happen when authorities become complacent, when the precursors of violence are ignored and when the lessons from history are forgotten. "In vivid and thoroughly researched detail, Andy Brown masterfully weaves two tragic stories ... this is an important and well-written read." -Gregory K. Moffatt, Ph.D., Author of *Blind-Sided: Homicide Where it is Least Expected and A Violent Heart* "An amazing book. An instant classic. Staff Sergeant Brown is a true guardian who saved countless lives with supernatural marksmanship skill in a moment of great need, but he has also proven himself to be a true warrior-wordsmit who will save even more lives, as the lessons from this book are learned and applied in our current violent times. Absolutely "required reading" for law enforcement and mental health professionals, but also profoundly valuable for anyone who wants to understand violence and mental illness in our society today." -Lt Col Dave Grossman (US Army, retired) Author of *On Combat*,

On Killing, and Assassination Generation" There are specific lessons in this book that can help us to prevent lethal tragedy. Lessons for bosses, subordinates, and coworkers. Lessons for law enforcement, and for psychologists, and for human resources personnel. But there are also general lessons for all of us that can save lives, though perhaps not so dramatically nor so heroically as Andy Brown saving uncounted lives when he 'rode to the sound of the guns.' -From the Foreword written by Massad Ayoob

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Customer Reviews

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of the vivid dysfunction of a troubled young airman and the reckless arrogance of a senior officer and aviator. As Andy Brown clearly displays, if warnings had been heeded, the behavior of both men would not have led to disastrous ends. ... this is an important and well-written read." -Gregory K. Moffatt, Ph.D., Author of *Blind-Sided: Homicide Where it is Least Expected* and *A Violent Heart* "Rich in fascinating detail and page-turning narration, *Warnings Unheeded* delivers memorable insights into the kind of slaughter that so often fills news cycles these days, and the resilience heroes need to fight back from the emotional toll of protecting other lives." -Charles Remsberg, Author of the *Street Survival* book series

Andy Brown is an Air Force law enforcement veteran from Port Orchard, Washington. After serving in Idaho, Greece, Washington, Hawaii and New Mexico, he returned to the Spokane, Washington area where he works for the Department of Homeland Security. He spent seven years researching and writing *Warnings Unheeded*. This book is part of his ongoing effort to share the lessons learned from the tragedies and his experience with the effects of trauma.

You don't have to be in the Air Force or even know about these events prior to reading this book. In the end, you'll be more observant in your daily life, you'll have a better appreciation for your "gut feeling", a desire to be prepared for more than what your average day throws at you. *Warnings Unheeded* is a well written, objective look at two tragic incidents at an Airforce base in Eastern Washington in the mid 90's. Having grown up in the Northwest, I remember both the hospital shooting and the bomber crash. To read about the history of these tragic moments, and to understand just how avoidable both were is unsettling. The fact that author Andy Brown can remain so incredibly objective is remarkable considering his history is directly intertwined with the hospital shooting. Andy was the Security Forces officer who stopped Airman Dean Melberg mid-rampage on that day in June of 1994. One would think that would be enough to make it difficult not to vilify a man who so clearly deserves it. Yet, Mr. Brown tactfully gives you the history of the shooter and the many administrative mistakes that led to his continued role in the Air Force. It may seem a bit odd that this book also covers the topic of Colonel Bud Holland and the bomber crash that took place just days later, but again, the administrative missteps that ignored the repeated warnings of the airmen around the pilot in question are the real villains here. Enough review writing, Go buy *Warnings Unheeded*, support Andy Brown, and learn to consider the world around you at any given moment. It was the lightning fast actions of Andy and the men and women around him that day that ran headlong into danger to help others that helped minimize the amount of loss that day. While we

can never forget those that were lost, we can honor their memory by being prepared to live our lives to the fullest each day.

This superb book is many things. It is an unflinching postmortem; it is a step in the author's recovery from PTSD; it is a vitally important analysis of the roots of tragedy; and in being all of these things, it is a scream ... one we need to hear. Both of these tragedies could have been prevented. In both cases, whistles were blown, repeatedly. But, in the bureaucracy that is the United States Air Force, those warnings, as the title suggests, went unheeded, not through maliciousness, but as part of a complacent culture. I wanted to detail the many reasons I think that this book is a must read for law enforcement, for administrators, and even for people who simply need to protect their families, their workplaces, and their homes, but I find that I cannot. I don't have the words. I will simply title this review "Required Reading".

After reading this book, I am unable to think of a more appropriate title than

ÃƒÂ¢Ã ¬Ã Å“Warnings Unheeded.ÃƒÂ¢Ã ¬Ã Å•More impressive, is the meticulous detail Andy took to ensure the final product is thorough and accurate. The way he weaved two separate incidents, alternating them chronologically by chapters, is a literary work of art. Yes, the book is personal, yet surprisingly objective, and easy to readÃƒÂ¢Ã ¬Ã Å•hard to put down. Andy writes as if this has always been his nicheÃƒÂ¢Ã ¬Ã Å„¢ in life. To be honest, the subject matter was a tad tough for me. Dean Mellberg was a client of ours in Social Actions, First Sergeant Jones a very good friend, and Col Wolff was our direct reporting official. However, I walk away from thisÃƒÂ¢Ã ¬Ã Å“collected workÃƒÂ¢Ã ¬Ã Å• a better person as it was un-expectantly therapeutic in nature for me. AndyÃƒÂ¢Ã ¬Ã Å„¢s dedication to research every detail provided meÃƒÂ¢Ã ¬Ã Å“pieces of the puzzleÃƒÂ¢Ã ¬Ã Å• I never had. And, no one would have blamed him had this book taken a punitive position against the violent and deeply disturbed perpetrator. Instead, he chose to be fair and balanced throughout the majority of the bookÃƒÂ¢Ã ¬Ã Å•simply providing the unadulterated facts. As I impartially navigate my way through these pages, I could not help but believe these two were destined to meet. To be more accurate, Andy was the only person, fully prepared, to have stopped him. It is as if the Lord equipped him to save countless lives that June day in 1994. I, and my family, are forever grateful to Andy for his heroic actions that day and for this wonderful piece of literature.

I just finished reading this book! It felt like a very personal book to me because I was working on

Fairchild AFB that day. I was a civilian working on the main base but I had previously worked as a civilian in building 9010 at the hospital annex and I knew one of the people who had been shot. Even though I knew the outcome I still cried in certain portions of the book. I think it's a very well-written book. It's very detailed, honest, gut-wrenching. And to this day I thank you Andy Brown for your willingness to ride into the face of danger and for the lives that you saved by stopping that one person on that fateful day!

Without lurid details or overwrought prose, Andy Brown helps us understand what Fairchild AFB had to endure in those tragic days of June in 1994. With a clear and concise voice, he illustrates the events leading up to the twin tragedies with a thoroughness and professionalism I suspect he brings to every task he takes on. But this is no dry recounting of facts, and Brown's compassion for the victims is as clear as his prose. This book kept me up far later than I intended every night while reading it, and it will stay with me for the rest of my life. We are very fortunate that the man who stopped the shooter has written this book for us - doubly so that he has proven to be a talented writer. I highly recommend this book.

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