

## A Brief Bio on Owen West



Owen West served as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations from 2017-2019 after a 20-year career as a senior energy risk taker and adventurer at Goldman, Sachs.

Owen attended Harvard College on a ROTC scholarship. He was an all-Ivy League rower and a 2<sup>nd</sup> Team all-American. He graduated *cum laude* and spent six years in the Marine Corps infantry leading units as large as 200 before attending Stanford Business School. Owen was co-president of his Stanford class and the CEO of *Challenge for Charity*, the largest business school non-profit corporation with over 2,500 members, benefiting the Special Olympics.

In 1997, Owen joined Goldman, Sachs. For twenty years as an energy trader his primary job was to take risks in the world's most volatile markets. He was ultimately the partner in charge of the firm's riskiest trading business unit—global natural gas and U.S. power. In 2017, he left Goldman to serve as Jim Mattis' Assistant Secretary of Defense.

While at Goldman, Owen took two leaves of absence to rejoin the Marines in Iraq. In 2003, he participated in *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. In 2004, he used his vacation time to embed as a reporter in Fallujah for *Slate/Newsweek*. In 2006, he deployed as an advisor to an Iraqi infantry battalion holding a remote outpost in Anbar Province. He led a mixed group of 12 soldiers and Marines living with and fighting alongside 500 Iraqis.

An endurance athlete, Owen took two additional leaves from Goldman. He attempted the technical North Face of Mount Everest and competed six times in 400-mile Eco Challenge adventure races, labeled the “world's toughest race.” He captained two Marine Corps teams, and was once the lone male navigator alongside three Playboy centerfolds. He has completed multiple Ironman and Ultra-marathons, and is the 2015 Clydesdale (220 lbs+) national triathlon champion for the 40+ age group.

Owen is the author of three books. *Sharkman Six* (Simon and Schuster, 2001) won the Boyd literary award for best military novel. *The Snake Eaters* (Simon and Schuster, 2012) detailed the combat advisory mission in Iraq. He has written dozens of articles and op-eds on the military and adventure sports published in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Slate*, *Playboy*, *Men's Journal*, *NY Post*, *Popular Mechanics*, *Topic*, and *The New York Times*.

Owen is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. He was a Director of the Positive Coaching Alliance, and is a certified trainer of youth coaches and a multi-sport coach for his two boys. He was also a Director of the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation. He and his wife founded two \$250,000+ scholarships benefitting the children of fallen.

Owen is an advisory director of *No One Left Behind*, dedicated to safeguarding our international partners in combat, especially interpreters who are most vulnerable to reprisal. He has sponsored two Iraqi interpreters who today reside in the U.S.