

WAR STORIES

Infantry Techniques I

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This publication is part of **Project Leatherneck**, a collection of training aids, references, and research aimed at improving the combat readiness of the Infantry Battalion.

If you have any ideas on how to improve this publication,
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Glossary

Preface

WAR STORIES: Infantry Techniques I is a collection of extracts from books on infantry combat that I read while deployed to Okinawa in 1991. Each extract was selected to demonstrate an infantry technique. These extracts were taken from historical accounts, non-fiction references and war novels. The purpose of this collection is to spark the interest of the professional infantryman and cause him to re-examine his own unit's techniques and SOPs.

Many of the authors whose words are reprinted here were participants in the events they describe. They have credibility. They represent the experienced voice of the combat veteran.

The extracts selected apply to foot-mobile infantry. There are no tunnels, no MOUT, no NBC, no anti-armor, no tank coordination, nor mechanized operations. Specialized techniques that do not apply to standard infantry units were not included.

Editor's notes are few and far between.

B.B.M.

Sources

The following books are the sources referenced in *WAR STORIES: Infantry Techniques I*.

NON-FICTION

Brennan's War

by Matthew Brennan

Pocket Books, New York: 1985

The Bridge at Dong Ha

by John Grider Miller

Dell Publishing, New York: 1989

A Distant Challenge: The US Infantryman in Vietnam 1967-1972

Edited by: *INFANTRY MAGAZINE*

With Reflections by: Lieutenant Colonel Albert N. Garland, USA (Retired)

Jove Books, New York: 1983

The Green Beret

Editor: Ashley Brown

Villard Books, New York: 1986

The Green Berets' Guide to Outdoor Survival, Second Edition

by Don Paul

Pathfinder Publications, Kailua, Oahu, Hawaii: 1985

Infantry in Vietnam, Small Unit Actions in the Early Days: 1965-66

Edited by: Lieutenant Colonel Albert N. Garland, USA (Retired)

Jove Books, New York: 1982

Iwo Jima

by Richard F. Newcomb

Bantam Books, New York: 1965

On the Border With Crook

by John G. Bourke

University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska: 1971

Once a Warrior King

by David Donovan

Ballantine Books, New York: 1985

Personal Firepower

by Edward C. Ezell

Bantam Books, New York: 1988

SAS: Secret War in South-East Asia
by Peter Dickens
Ivy Books, New York: 1983

SEALs in Action
by Kevin Dockery
Avon Books, New York: 1991

FICTION

The 13th Valley
by John M. DelVecchio
Bantam Books, New York: 1982

Crossfire
by J. C. Pollock
Dell Publishing, New York: 1985

Charlie Mike
by Leonard B. Scott
Ballantine Books, New York: 1985

The Last Run
by Leonard B. Scott
Ballantine Books, New York: 1987

The Hill
by Leonard B. Scott
Ballantine Books, New York: 1989

1: Ambush

Chapter 4, **Claymores**, also has a good deal of material on ambush.

A Distant Challenge

Page 67 “One of the weakest tactical areas in Vietnam was the ambush...too many commanders felt...the night belonged to the enemy. This was nonsense...A rifle company...cannot operate all day and then...conduct ambushes at night. But this is...what happened in many units...To conduct a proper night ambush, a unit must have rest and time to prepare...Some commanders seemed to feel that a...reconnaissance would compromise the ambush site. A small reconnaissance patrol, well camouflaged and taking...pains to remain undetected, had little chance of being discovered...Too many ambush patrols...moved out and...ended up saying, ‘Well, this looks...good, let’s set up here.’”

Another...error was the failure to establish...security at the ambush site. In a linear ambush, security had to be...at least 100 meters up and down the trail from the kill zone, and rear security put...beyond hand grenade range. Many leaders were reluctant to put out...security elements because they felt they were endangering their men. In reality if a leader failed to put them out, he endangered his entire patrol...one procedure we used was communications wire strung from the security to the main body...The security element must allow the enemy to pass...then cut down any enemy...who attempted to flee...Using a claymore... for...hitting the enemy...as they fled also worked well.”

Page 68 “No matter how much rest the men have...some...are going to doze. Communications wire strung along the position and wrapped around each man’s wrist was one way to alert...them to the enemy’s approach...”

The most common mistakes were...Poor noise discipline, talking, shifting...and slamming of weapon bolts. Not enough fire power in the initial springing...Failure to have escape routes covered by claymores and artillery...”

Page 69 “the VC habitually followed our units, keeping tabs on them...It proved to be a good practice...to...drop off a squad to set up a stay-behind ambush.”

Page 224 “Contacts were violent and brief. Claymores and fragmentation grenades were the main weapons, and small arms were seldom used. The surprise effect was so great that the VC normally died in the killing zone without returning fire. At first light the killing zone would be swept and enemy weapons, documents and other materiel would be secured for...evacuation to battalion.”

Editor: The above unit did not search the kill zone until daylight? What about nearby enemy forces coming to investigate?

Page 225 “The rear...platoon would go into a ‘hide’ location...and then sneak back as a stay-behind force. The batting average for kills by these stay-behind elements never slipped below .500.”

The Green Beret

Page 42 “Six claymore mines erupted simultaneously across a 75 yd section of jungle track. Those Viet Cong...not killed outright hit the deck as a barrage of...automatic fire and...grenade launchers added to the cacophony of battle. Only one guerrilla survived...and, as he lay pressed to the...earth, a...snatch squad...raced across the track to...their prey.

Dragging the prisoner to his feet, the squad headed for...the pre-arranged rendezvous, their...withdrawal covered by the other members of the...team. To prevent an enemy follow-up, the two

flank parties activated the 60-second delay fuzes on a pair of Claymores...an hour later, the team was back at base, their captive handed over for interrogation.”

Infantry in Vietnam

Page 58 “Fenlon...established an ambush along the trail with claymore mines ...along the entire length of the killing zone. At 0800 a squad of NVA...each man pushing a bicycle...moved into the ambush, were taken under fire, and dispatched. Straddling...each bicycle was a saddlebag...containing 50 new potato masher type hand grenades. After photographing the hand grenades and the dead soldiers, the bicycles were booby trapped with flashlight batteries and claymore mines...”

Editor: Note the use of a camera to quickly collect intelligence information.

Once a Warrior King

Page 1 “Five men...Sergeant Abney, and I were lying in ambush, waiting for...enemy guerrillas... I was pleased with my men...We had been waiting quietly since we...moved into position. I had not heard...talking, I had not seen any cigarettes glowing...we just watched the darkness for our...enemy. The...insects...stung, but we...remained still and silent...”

I heard an urgent whisper...‘Cong lai!’ The communists were coming...

Staring...intently, I did see movement...One by one they emerged...ten men walking...along the trail...in addition to...weapons nine...carried...packs on their backs. I could tell...they were exhausted...

The packs...were large...Each man had to struggle under that burden as well as carry his AK-47...and the ammo strapped to his chest. The second man...had...some sort of...satchel suspended on a strap...I guessed the satchel carrier was the...leader...

Each man had his eyes...on the ground...Each labored step required such effort that the men were no longer paying attention...They...bunched up...another...sin I blamed the leader for. He should have kept his men spread out so they would not...come into an ambush zone...at the same time...

I pressed my cheek against...my M-16 and...brought its...front sight blade...to the...man at the head of the...column...

My target was...ten yards away...my first blast...killed the morning calm. My target disappeared in the...air around the muzzle blast.

I heard the others open up instantly and...made a mental note that we...had started the ambush together. It is important that an ambush be sprung with full force. It’s a powerful psychological factor that...immobilize the victims. The shock and confusion can stun them...and the...second when they pause...may be the...second you need to kill them.

I delivered my first...burst at the belly of my target...I could no longer see him, so I...dropped my sights...toward the ground where he should have fallen...We were now...around three seconds into the ambush.

My...sight found the...leader...he was...dropping into a crouch. His face was...taut in an expression of...shock...At T + 4 seconds I put a burst of...six rounds somewhere between the...man’s belt and...shoulders...I moved my barrel...to where my first target had been and released another spray...

At T + 6 seconds I looked...to see how things were going. One of the Cong had...gotten off the trail...Suddenly he threw out his arms and dropped face down...

At T + 8 seconds I changed magazines...At T + 12 seconds I...fired at some movement...One measure of a well laid and well sprung ambush is that your enemy doesn’t...get a chance to fire back...

At T + 16 seconds all firing had stopped...We all...waited...At T + 30 seconds I...stepped...onto the trail...then...I waved my men out of their positions. We had to search the dead. The ambush was over.

Now our drill was to rummage...through the...equipment of each victim and collect anything of military or intelligence value...I found the lead man...I cut...his pack and...sifted through the clothes,

medicines, and other odds and ends. I kept only a few ampules of the drugs. They had labels which indicated their origin in Poland and East Germany.

I turned...to...the...leader...I took the satchel...and looked inside...it was full of papers and record books...Two...men came by, gathering...weapons and ammo...Within five minutes we were ready to go.

In small-unit guerrilla wars you can spend hundreds of hours on...ambush...and rarely come away with such a clean sweep as this one...”

Personal Firepower

Page 109 “When the Viet Cong entered the killing area...the ambush was initiated by the detonation of the Claymore belts and the area was sealed with M-79 fire augmented by direct fire weapons. Artillery fires were adjusted into the area of contact and along likely avenues of escape.”

Page 110 “Claymore mines were...very effective in opening an ambush because of the extensive, instantaneous lethal zone generated, and because they did not reveal the location of the ambush patrol.”

Page 116 “a...platoon-size patrol...set up an ambush at a trail junction along the Song Re River. The patrol had two IR sights...At ...0500...the point man...saw men moving in the riverbed. The infrared sight operator reported ten Viet Cong crossing the river...at 75 meters’ distance. He opened fire...The infrared sight operator reported that three Viet Cong had been hit.”

Page 119 “an ambush patrol of the...28th Infantry...used the Small Starlight Scope to detect a company-size Viet Cong force moving toward their position. As the patrol prepared to...fire, its leader, using his Starlight device, discovered a second company-size VC unit moving...behind the first group. The patrol leader allowed the first section to pass so his men could ambush the second one. When the first group of VC returned to the sound of the fight, they started shooting...the other VC unit...the American patrol withdrew and called in artillery...the...platoon sergeant credited the Starlight Scope with saving their lives. Without it they would not have seen the second VC company...The platoon sergeant reported that the Starlight Scope was one of the most useful pieces of equipment he had ever used in battle.”

SAS: Secret War in South-East Asia

Page 143 “If explosive ambushes were to be laid on the enemy’s most likely entry routes, he might...reveal his presence...Claymore mines were the centerpieces...firing in cones up and down the track...we put them up trees to avoid the undergrowth and filled in the gaps with grenades, all wired together to trigger at the same moment. The big problem was the detonator cord, which was white...so we stuck moss onto it with black glue and when we came back later the moss had actually grown and the cords looked...like creepers...Positions were chosen where the enemy would be disinclined to leave the track by reason of some natural obstacle, such as a steep slope, and where it was leafy enough to conceal the weapons but open enough to permit their full blast. The layouts were planned in precise detail to include as many enemy as possible in the killing area...Triggers needed much thought, sited so that animals were less likely to activate them than men...Exact drawings were made with copies for base, showing in addition to the hardware the procedures for arming and disarming.

Painstaking slowness was the hallmark of laying. When at last it was done, ‘Gypsy’ would...be left alone in the lethal zone to make the final connections, knowing that in due course he must return for the even more hazardous task of taking it all away...Arming Day was 1 October, after which Smith and his patrol sat at the centre of his web waiting for the flies.”

Page 154 “Using detailed instructions...they would start by identifying...a distinctive tree and approaching it from a given direction. Then they would walk perhaps fifty yards on another line and dig

up a buried wire that was not dangerous but led to a forked stick from which the detonator was so many feet on such and such a bearing. 'Gipsy' would then disarm the ambush..."

Page 224 "McGillivray met the team at a lying-up place and immediate rendezvous 200 yards to the rear. Then he took Roberts and fifteen men forward to keep the first watch. He placed each man individually, in three groups with different functions though forming one continuous line at from five to twenty yards back from the track depending on the cover. In the commanding position abreast the log were Roberts, Franks, Nibau and three scouts; they were the killers. Condie, Callan and Shipley, each with a scout, formed the right-hand flank group; their tasks were to spot the enemy early and report him by pulling the cord which stretched along the whole line, then to pick off any enemy trying to escape and, finally, to give warning of any counterattack. Acting similarly on the left were Henry, Bilbao and their scouts..."

McGillivray went back to ensure that the rendezvous was organized to accept the withdrawal after a contact, a crucial moment when each man must be checked by name and the enemy prevented from joining in. He did not like his first position and had the bergens moved to a better one. Slater griped that this was most improper because the ambush party might miss it even if told of the change; but McGillivray planned to relieve the watch before anything was likely to happen and all would then be fully briefed..."

Then...the enemy returned...Shipley...pulled his cord and then again, five times in all, as rapidly as he could jerk his arm...Then something much more drastic happened on the right. Even as the ambush was sprung, Shipley became aware of a second enemy group, who now reacted violently. Deploying off the track on the near side, they put down a hail of fire...up the line of the ambush..."

Condie...shouted, 'Fall back on me.'...Shipley and Callan continued to the rendezvous because it was standard drill to retire immediately after an ambush; arriving, they were greatly agitated to find nothing and nobody there."

Page 249 "All practised together, particularly with claymore mines, which Hardy planned to use on the flanks of his ambush."

Page 250 "The junction resembled a roundabout...The ambush extended for 25 yards beyond this area on either side; the flanks were dropped back at right angles behind claymores pointing outwards to guard against a 'roll-up.'...Just behind...was...headquarters of eight men, one of whose tasks was to check every man through on retirement when urgency, noise and confusion might make it extremely difficult. Hardy...supported by...Penny...were both armed with silenced submachine-guns to deal with any small enemy groups without compromising the ambush for bigger game later..."

Two locals came by...somebody in the rear...farted...the pair halted involuntarily...turned their heads and...walked on..."

Page 253 "The drill whereby each Troop's withdrawal was covered by another and every man was checked by name had been carefully rehearsed, for the good reason that when a static formation suddenly becomes fluid and a running man first seen five yards away may be anybody, trigger-fingers become tautly sensitive...'Turn you hat inside out, ' Jake said (to show the recognition band, which was red), and then started shouting, 'Jake Vaughan'...at the top of his voice...there were a couple of guys ready to open fire, but one of them said, 'Hold it! I can see the band.'"

Seals in Action

Page 178 “As they reached the position...the squad deployed automatically without...orders. The...M60s moved one to each flank. Ed Fox tied...nylon rope to the bank and entered...the stream. The lieutenant stood in the center of the line formation spread out along Fox’s rope. The RTO stood behind the lieutenant to cover their rear. The entire squad had spread out on either side of the lieutenant for...about thirty meters.”

Editor: This rope technique is similar to using a comm wire pull line.

Page 180 “Jose fired his M203. A burst of...white light...illuminated the VC from the far side, silhouetting them perfectly...the firing stopped...the SEALs moved to gather materials and prisoners...picking up anything of interest...the prisoner was secured with a handling kit. The entire event...took six minutes from start to end with forty-five seconds of firing.”

The Last Run

Page 11 “the team found the trail they were to ambush and hid themselves in a thicket of bamboo...near the trail were...Claymore mines...the ambush had taken too long to set up...Stevens had really screwed up and walked out onto the trail. It’d taken...five precious minutes to erase his footprints and rearrange the plants he’d disturbed and crushed. Any dink could spot footprints and see a trampled path leading to a hide position...”

Wade pressed himself...to the ground as the enemy moved...into the kill-zone. He tried to keep his hand from trembling, and he began to press the Claymore mines’ detonator.

The world seemed to explode into a dark, brown-black cloud...Wade rose...and fired into the billowing cloud.”

Page 119 ““Once you blow your Claymores, you raise up and kill anybody still standin’. The thing you ...remember is - don’t shoot on automatic...what happens if everybody shoots on automatic? You all...change magazines at the same time! This...gives the dinks time to recover from the shock and start blastin’ back! Remember - once you have the initiative, keep it! Only two team members shoot auto. The rest shoot...semiautomatic...this ensures a steady rate of fire...”

Page 128 “Thumper critiqued their ambush. ‘You did a good job...setting up the Claymores and hiding yourselves but you failed to designate a rear security team. Based on terrain, sometimes you don’t need to, but in this case you had a trail forty meters behind you. I smelled you first. Which one of you uses ‘Old Spice’ aftershave?’ ...

‘You never wear after-shave or freshly washed fatigues, and you never smoke, take a shit, or eat C rations in ambush position. Dinks have been in the bush a long time, and the slightest trace of a ...smell tells ‘em you’re there.’”

Page 198 “Lieutenant Gibson...signaled them to pick up the Claymores they’d set up along their ambush trail...it was time to pull back and laager for the night. It was dangerous to stay in an ambush at night. The procedure was to pull back a couple hundred meters and sleep during the darkness, then return at dawn to set up again. Gibson...walked to the left flank of the ambush to get in an overwatch position. Watkins would do the...right flank. They would keep an eye on the trail while...team members...picked up their Claymore mines and rewrapped the firing wire.”

Editor: The four-man team did not ambush at night because they were a very small unit behind enemy lines. Their withdrawal from an ambush usually included a helicopter extract.

2: Booby Traps

Brennan's War

Page 96 “A soldier slipped...on the edge of a deep pit lined with stakes. The hole was covered by thin bamboo strips with leaves on top, and hidden by a layer of sand. We learned to spot the traps by the...darker color of the sand over them.”

Page 271 “‘Three-Two. We have a claymore hanging in a tree up here. We are investigating.’...they had gathered around the mine to have a look. I knew in that instant...I was talking to a dead men. If they made any sudden movement, the NVA would trigger the ambush...I pressed the transmitting button. ‘Three-Two!...Get down!’”

The Hill

Page 166 “the point man...tripped a fishline attached to a grenade...The slack man...flung his body to the side of the trail, impaling himself on hidden punji sticks. The sharpened sticks stuck...ten inches out of the ground and, covered in grass, were almost impossible to see.”

Page 168 “He...searched...the woodline for wind mines...Thirty feet up, tied to a tree trunk, was an American claymore mine...pointed toward the hilltop. The VC had a...flare parachute dangling in the branches with a string tied to it. When the chopper winds caught the miniature chute, it would...pull the string...detonating the...mine.”

3: Camouflage

A Distant Challenge

Page 12 “they observed a large cluster of small haystacks. As they closed...the haystacks began to move. Each stack was an enemy soldier...”

On the Border With Crook

Page 37 “Apaches...were wont to steal in close...and hide behind some sheltering rock...They knew how to disguise themselves so thoroughly that one might almost step upon a warrior...head and shoulders wrapped up in a bundle of yucca shoots or...grass, and...body rubbed over with the clay or sand...the Apache could...approach to within ear-shot...and even entered...military camps...”

The 13th Valley

Page 577 “Snell had camouflaged his radio by sticking to it six pieces of grass, just enough to break up its square appearance...”

4: Claymore Mines

This chapter contains a number of Mechanical Ambush extracts. See the **Ambush** chapter for more Claymore entries.

A Distant Challenge

Page 65 “One of the finest weapons in a jungle perimeter was the claymore...the claymore was an aimed weapon...and...could be...sighted...to cover the desired...area.

Some men...put the claymore out too far for fear of being injured in the backblast. But the enemy had a habit of sneaking up...and turning the claymores around. To counter this, the claymores were placed close enough to be observed...we also found it effective to rig the claymore with a triplare or anti-intrusion device.

A claymore could be detonated safely...just outside the foxhole against the berm...Another good rig for a claymore was up in a tree...aimed...toward the ground. While locations for claymores and triplares were selected before dark...they were not emplaced until after dark.”

Page 69 “One of the most effective weapons...on...ambush was the claymores...For greatest effectiveness, the claymores were located...20 meters from the trail. Each claymore was sighted to insure...coverage of the killing zone and to make certain...the fire fans overlapped. To get a simultaneous detonation, they were rigged in a daisy chain using detonating cord. Claymores were also used to cover escape routes...and...flank and rear security...”

Page 69 “The anti-intrusion device with the tripwire area covered by claymores could be an...effective small ambush. The tripwire was spiderwebbed across the trail, high enough so that...animals would not set it off, with the triggerman positioned a safe distance...a company often rigged this device for use by the rear security element.”

Personal Firepower

Page 109 “The 3rd of the 47th derived much...ambush firepower from...Claymore mines...their combat experience demonstrated, the Claymore...was one of the most lethal weapons...ever produced.”

Page 110 “In fixed defensive positions Claymore mines were used in depth, with overlapping kill zones.

Seals in Action

Page 175 “Mike carried...an M18A1 Claymore mine fitted with a thirty-second fuse and an M60 pull igniter. In case the squad had to run from the ambush while being chased...The Claymore could be placed near the...back trail with the fuse pulled. With the blast radius of a Claymore, the chances were that any pursuing Viet Cong would be caught by the trap.”

The 13th Valley

Page 220 “MAs were set on the LZ...The MAs, or mechanical ambushes, were booby traps assembled of claymore mines...det cord, blasting caps, a battery and a triggering mechanism attached to a trip wire...

Command detonated claymores were now being set in front of each fighting position.”

Page 527 “Egan carried five claymore mines in a towel. Pop carried a used radio battery, rolls of det cord and trip wire, a slide-type trigger mechanism and blasting caps...

Egan set one claymore two feet off the road, below brush...He angled the mine...up and across the road. Pop unscrewed the plastic fastener used to secure a blasting cap, inserted an end of det cord and screwed the fastener back in place. Then he unrolled the cord and brought it across the road to where Egan was aiming a second claymore. Pop measured the cord, cut it and returned to the road...he camouflaged the cord, burying it in the road mud, being...careful to reconstruct the cartwheel grooves after burying the cord...Egan inserted and secured the cord to one side of the second claymore connecting the first two mines. Pop...secured the new end of the det cord roll to the second insert on the mine and...weaved the cord through the brush down the trail to where Egan was aiming a third claymore directly across toward Cherry. Pop connected this mine to the second. Egan set up a fourth and fifth down the road, one on each side. Pop daisy-chained the remaining mines to the first three. At the center of the MA...Egan stretched a...trip wire...three inches above, the road. He fastened the trip wire to one side of a slide trigger. Egan secured the other side of the trigger to a...stump and camouflaged it. From one side of the trigger he ran a blasting cap wire to one terminal of the battery. Pop removed an electrical blasting cap from his...pocket, unwound the wires, attached one to the trigger slide and inserted the cap into the first claymore. Egan checked the slide mechanism, checked the trip wire and camouflage for the mines and the battery...He quickly visually rechecked the booby trap then armed it by attaching the second blasting cap wire to the second terminal of the battery.”

Page 547 “Cherry worked...methodically...setting the first MA. He set and aimed the claymores from one point, in three directions. He hid the mines on the road corridor wall aiming across, up and down the trail.”

The Last Run

Page 118 ““What you...just seen is...how not to set up a kill zone. They directed...their Claymores to blow straight across the trail - wrong! The only dinks they gonna kill is the dude...in front them mines...”

Rose repositioned the crescent-shaped explosives. ‘If you put’em at an angle so they blow down the trail you can kill more...when you add the other team’s mines, you got ...a cross-blowing effect...’”

5: Communications

SAS: Secret War in South-East Asia

Page 86 “they had missed their evening call...No radio was infallible...and only when three consecutive calls were missed did emergency action become mandatory.”

Page 136 “The evening signal was...coded and tapped out in Morse code...this generally obsolete method allowed the use of high-frequency with its much longer range...No restrictions were placed on the volume of signalling...It was mandatory to send at least two signals a day and if any were missed the emergency organization would slot into gear; three, and the patrol must return to the border.

The 13th Valley

Page 607 “Andrews is screaming, ‘Bravo! Bravo!’ Alpha’s code for medic.”

Charlie Mike

Page 41 “‘Observed three separate units of five, eight, and five NVA moving north to south, location XJ869246. Time’ -he looked at his watch - ‘fourteen-thirty hours. They were carrying AK-47s and packs.’”

Page 304 “‘Sit rep...follows. On high-speed road, location: from Coors, one right, two up. Bad guys moving...west. NVA and civilians...carrying heavy loads. A few trucks, lots of motorbikes...’
Colven...looked at the red grease pencil dot labeled BEER. One right and two up...he quickly plotted the team’s location.”

Page 321 “They were all going to fire for two minutes and pull back when Grady blew his whistle.”

Editor: Whistles have been used as a military signalling device for centuries. This example is from Vietnam.

The Last Run

Page 164 “he’d replied by pushing the side bar twice. Two squelch breaks was the code for ‘all is well, no change in situation’”

Page 168 “‘This is Three-One, spotted five VC, from John, one right, two point one up. Four carrying AK-47s heading southeast. One VC remains...am observing, will initiate later. Out’
Childs...looked at the map...He found ‘John’ and plotted over one grid square to the right, then up 2.1 grid squares.”

Page 192 “‘Eagle Assault, what line number of KIA and WIA? Over.’
‘Sierra-three, line number zero-one, KIA; line number zero-four, WIA.’
Foley didn’t need to look at the list to determine the name of the dead soldier.”

Page 291 “Selando carefully pushed the side bar twice to break squelch. ‘One-three, this is Three Alpha. If you are having radio problems break squelch twice.’ There was nothing...’One-three, if you’re in trouble break squelch twice.’ The static...stopped two distinctive times.

'One-three, are there dinks close by?' Again there were two breaks...

'One-three...Break squelch once for each kilometer you're away from the Stadium.' Selando pressed the bar three times..."

6: Danger Areas

Infantry in Vietnam

Page 89 “Franklin knew...he was looking at a likely ambush site...he told...the squad leader...to establish a base of fire at the edge of the open area...He...sent one of...3rd Squad’s fire teams along the left side of the clearing and...led the other 3rd Squad fire team along the right side of the clearing. This...was a familiar maneuver for the...Platoon: one squad checking out a danger area, one squad providing fire support, and one squad ready to react...”

SAS: Secret War in South-East Asia

Page 216 “But there was still that bloody track, where...the enemy would certainly be waiting with machine-guns sited to fire along its length...Shipley did not expose even half an eye to see if it was clear, but stopped and beckoned the others; they bunched and leapt across as one man, offering a target too fleeting...Then they froze to listen for evidence that they had been seen.”

7: Demolitions

The Bridge at Dong Ha

Page 102 “the demolitions instructor had given...credit to the railroad men who used earmuff charges to cut track. ‘Someday you might...cut track...And you’ll have to do it quickly and cleanly and not use...more demo than you need...Think of putting on a pair of earmuffs, crooked. One earmuff covers the front part of your left ear and the other covers the back part of your right ear. If you put the earmuffs on straight ...the two explosions cancel each other out...

‘But if you offset the charges...like the crooked earmuffs, the...force of the two charges will push right past each other and shear the rail cleanly. The...railway men called this a twister. The Brits used twisters to cut track on the River Kwai bridge...They were backups for the main charge, set with electrical detonators...

‘You always need a backup system. Charges fail...Fuzes fail...Detonators fail...’”

A Distant Challenge

Page 71 “We found a...number of dud bombs and artillery shells...This amounted to a lot of...booby traps that the enemy did not get...it...became policy...to carry explosives and to blow duds in place.”

Infantry in Vietnam

Page 60 “He remembered...if he mixed the C-4 with engine oil he could get a highly sticky charge, one that once slapped against an object would remain in place without additional tying or taping.”

8: Fieldcraft

Fieldcraft is a cover term for the outdoor skills of an infantryman. Like a hunter, a good infantryman knows how to live in the wilderness with very little support. In addition, a good infantryman knows how to leave very little evidence of his presence behind. This chapter covers noise discipline, trash discipline, light discipline, gear techniques and discipline, and techniques on cooking, washing, and sleeping.

A Distant Challenge

Page 56 “he escaped...carrying off his dead and wounded, their weapons, and even empty cartridges. We captured numerous enemy documents which either condemned or commended certain units for the police of the battlefield. On one occasion, after an 18-hour battle, there was one particular bunker from which an LMG had been firing; after the fight...not one empty cartridge case could be found. At other times, enemy dead were found, and lying by their side were large tin cans filled with empty cartridge cases...”

Editor: The ‘he’ in the first sentence is the NVA.

Page 70 “our soldiers were a major part of the enemy’s supply system...He tended to discard anything he considered extra and the idea of policing the battlefield was distasteful to him...
The enemy...was a scavenger...The amount of US equipment found on enemy dead and prisoners could be startling...from weapons and ammunition to...insect repellent...
One hundred seventy-four US grenades were recaptured...
Thirty-five enemy boobytraps used captured US hand grenades. Four enemy boobytraps used captured US claymores...10 enemy antitank mines were discovered...rigged for electrical detonation by using parts of discarded US AN/PRC25 batteries.”

Page 186 “two boys were caught collecting spring-action devices from the smoke grenades...The boys stated that the VC had told them that they wanted these devices.”

Page 236 “One aspect of security often overlooked is battlefield police. Enemy forces, especially guerrillas, will use anything discarded or lost by friendly forces. Batteries, electrical devices and munitions are particularly critical. After each stop, or before moving from night defensive positions, the...commander must take steps to insure that each...area is thoroughly policed...paper should be burned or buried, discarded rations should be destroyed, and unserviceable ammunition, batteries, electrical devices, and other equipment should be evacuated or destroyed.
Leaders must check individual soldiers to insure that hand grenades, ammo magazines and other equipment are all properly secured to prevent accidental loss. Stay-behind ambushes should be used to take advantage of enemy attempts to forage abandoned night defensive positions.”

Page 260 “Captured documents reveal...US troops clumsy and vulnerable to boobytrapping...US troops discard munitions and...equipment. US troops give C-rations to children and villagers...C-rations...supplement...the VC daily ration. US troops sleep on ambush, set up RTO watch only. Radio gives away ambushes by noise of the receiver...US radio security bad, easily monitored and broken with Panasonic...portable radios. Reaction time for US fire support weapons and air-artillery-mortar is very slow...US troop movement easily telescoped by use of...early warning signaling systems throughout the hamlets.”

SAS: Secret War in South-East Asia

Page 95 “Wait until last light in stand-to positions before putting up bashas. Ideally the camp should be on a hillside (hammocks are useful for this) so as to be clear of ridges, away from water and at least 200 yards from any track; bury rubbish more than 20 yards away and so deep that pigs cannot dig it up.”

Page 136 “before daybreak...everyone would...be sitting on his packed bergen, facing outwards with weapon cradled. Breakfast...would be taken...after the first hour’s march. All rubbish was to be carried at least that distance before being buried below the reach of pig-snouts...The camp site was to be left immaculate with every leaf in place and never visited again unless used as the patrol rendezvous for emergencies.”

Page 138 “Progress was...slow, one and a half miles a day, but at that speed they moved almost soundlessly, left few tracks, observed minutely...Cutting their path had...to be a last expedient...”

Page 187 “Sleeping above a swamp was...difficult to any but...monkeys...The technique involved selecting two trees the right distance apart, hanging your bergen on one, getting your hammock out and slinging it, climbing the first tree to the lowest branch, changing into dry clothes, wringing out the sodden ones and hanging them out to dry, sliding down into the hammock and resting snugly over the watery waste. One false move meant a mighty splash, a silent...guffaw from your companions and night-long misery.”

Page 214 “they found much else; including, it pained them to report, a previous SAS patrol’s basha-site clearly identified by two ration tins.”

Page 238 “Meanwhile, the Gurkhas had arrived...guided by Lawrence Smith...delighted to be surrounded by large numbers of brave and competent soldiers, but appalled by the clashing of mess-tins, the thwacking of Kukris and the tramp, tramp, tramp of the boys marching.”

Page 240 “While they were there, a platoon of 30 soldiers toiled up the ridge and rested at the top...they carried no packs and were seen before they were heard, so silent was their approach.”

*Editor: British terms, **basha** is any lean-to or tent, **bergen** is a backpack, **tins** are tin cans.*

Seals in Action

Page 176 “Several of the squad...ate native food, fish and rice, every day because the VC claimed to be able to smell an American ‘beef eater’ a distance away.”

The 13th Valley

Page 242 “Very carefully Egan brushed the night’s dirt from his fatigues and poncho liner. He folded the liner and placed it in his ruck. Then he brushed his teeth. He used no water, simply allowing toothpaste and saliva to foam. He ejected a white stream of foam into a tiny hole and he covered the hole with dirt. Then he sucked the remaining foam from the bristles and swallowed. He carefully replaced the brush in a plastic carrying case, placed the case in a sock and placed the sock in the ammo can at the base of his rucksack. In the sock the case could not rattle against the inside of the ammo can. Egan checked his ruck carefully again for loose items. He tightened this, adjusted that. He checked his canteens. One was two-thirds full. He took a drink and passed it to Cherry who was also packing up. Cherry drank and

handed it back. It was still a third full. Egan emptied the water on the ground. He did not want it to slosh as he walked.”

Page 315 “M-79 rounds are heavy and Numbnuts was now carrying 58 HE and three buckshot rounds...At each stop...Numbnuts discarded rounds of ammunition...Two in a small crevice, three beneath a rock, six in a cathole beneath his defecation. He bailed...anything he could, discarded over half his ammunition...”

Page 379 “He was pilfering the NVA ruck. Along with a bag of rice and a bowl there was black licorice candy, a C-ration B-2 Unit, US matches and various odds and ends Alpha had left at their resupply site.”

Page 423 “Jax removed packets of cocoa, sugar and cream, and a piece of C-4...He lit the C-4, it flared white hot and died out. The water boiled.”

Page 430 “Hackworth muffled a cough in the crook of his arm, trapping the sound completely.”

9: First Aid

Iwo Jima

Page 175 “Garrett...recognized...the jugular vein had been pierced. He...slit the wound with a knife, laid the vein bare and clamped it. Then he stuffed the hole with gauze...At the battalion aid station the Navy doctor...whistled in admiration at the surgery.”

Once a Warrior King

Page 166 “His leg ended in a bloody stump...We stopped...the bleeding by using a shoestring tourniquet...”

SAS: Secret War in South-East Asia

Page 5 “Such bleeding could only be held by a tightly-bound tourniquet...Sergeant...Large had said...’When you’re hit, move; you won’t feel like it, but if you don’t you’re going to be hit again.’ So which to do...?...Move...Take sweat-rag, put a lumpy knot in the middle, press firmly against the artery in the groin, tie round the limb...dagger through, twist to tighten and stick through trousers to hold steady...Then a shot of morphine; that was the drill, because...the drug would also slow his heart and the bleeding.”

Page 126 “Owing to his...insistence on taking paludrine...there were few tropical fevers, but exhaustion...and prolonged tiredness reduced resistance...”

Page 129 “Skardon saw blood...spurting under pressure from White’s upper thigh and knew that a tourniquet must be applied within seconds...he grabbed White’s collar and ...dragged him...ten yards to a shallow depression...”

10: Gear

A Distant Challenge

Page 226 “All units traveled light. Only essential equipment was taken...this meant weapon, ammo, load-bearing equipment, poncho, rations, and air mattress. The standard 70-pound rucksack...popular with many US units was forbidden. Resupply aircraft weren’t used and units lived off the land, just like their guerrilla opponents. Medevac was summoned only for seriously wounded. Lightly wounded and moderately sick went along with their units. Everyone realized that once a chopper came near the element, the operation was compromised, and the enemy would know exact locations and intentions of the friendlies.”

Infantry in Vietnam

Page 127 “...the men of Company B...could have passed for South Vietnamese Regional Forces with their conglomeration of jungle uniforms and cellophane bags of rice slung around their shoulders...rather than air mattresses and sleeping bags, they carried lightweight nylon hammocks captured from the Viet Cong...”

On the Border With Crook

Page 348 “baggage was cut down to the minimum: every officer and soldier was to have the clothes on his back and no more; one overcoat, one blanket...and one...poncho...was the allowance carried by General Crook...General Crook had determined to make his column as mobile as a column of Indians, and he knew that example was more potent than a score of general orders.”

SAS: Secret War in South-East Asia

Page 16 “The Gurka platoon commander...ordered his men to turn their jungle hats inside out and expose the red bands sewn there for easy recognition; they would not blend so well with the background but better red, in this case, than dead.”

Page 30 “Woodhouse experimented with...light-weight rations. For himself...one tin of sardines a day...in Borneo he would make a standard operational requirement: that an SAS patrol must be able to vanish for a fortnight, unhindered by apron-strings to friends or the need to reveal itself to foes.”

Page 58 “Their rations were cached in places calculated to give them tactical flexibility...”

Page 61 “resupply aircraft...was due every seventh day...”

Page 95 “Each man’s load must be strictly limited and supervised by the patrol commander; carry no more than seven days’ rations and hide the rest ...carefully, returning to the cache with the utmost caution.”

Page 134 “On his person would be his escape compass, 100 Malay dollars sewn into his clothing, field dressing, morphine...torch, notebook and pencil, map (never to be marked with his true position, but a fictitious track entirely in Sabah to imply a genuine navigational error), loo-paper, matches, knife, watch, and wrist compass...On his belt would be his compass, “parang,” two full magazines, water-bottle,

mug, sterilizing tablets, two days rations in his mess tin, spoon, cooking stove with hexamine fuel tablets, more matches, paludrine, wire saw, insect repellent, rifle cleaning kit and a hand grenade.

The bergen's contents varied from man to man...Hoe was...carrying the radio...so...his food was shared around the others, leaving him with his...shirt, trousers, socks...nylon cord...Manbahadur took the binoculars, camera, and two large water-bags. The latter were carried empty; on passing a stream all would replenish their personal bottles and drink their fill...A night-stop near a stream would not be safe and it was then that plenty of water was needed for brewing, soaking dehydrated foods, cooking and washing-up. The supply was carried up in one load and the water-point never used again."

Editor: British terms, torch is flashlight, loo is toilet, bergen is backpack, parang is a type of jungle knife, paludrine prevents jungle fever, tin is tin can, and fortnight is 14 days.

Seals in Action

Page 174 "As the point man...Fox preferred a shotgun...Ed would also have two...fragmentation grenades, two AN-M8 HC white smoke grenades, one prisoner-handling kit, and a 100 foot coil of 5/16" nylon rope. Ed was...razzed...for...wearing panty hose on operations to keep the leeches off his legs."

Page 175 "each member...would carry...a survival kit. The survival kit was...carried in an M14 magazine pouch and included a folding knife, flint and matches, ten feet of copper or steel wire, fishhooks, and a small mirror. Additional items were added...according to the wants of the individual."

The 13th Valley

Page 178 "Half the troops removed their helmets and tied them to their rucksacks...Many of the boonierats felt the encumbrance of the heavy steel pot was not worth the slight probability of protection from a glancing bullet or piece of shrapnel. Against a direct hit a helmet was considered useless...Some men stripped off their shirts...whites...with skin that could be seen through five meters of dense jungle, covered their torsos with olive drab tee-shirts. Infantrymen in the 101st did not wear flack jackets in the boonies, the trade-off of protection for encumbrance not being worthwhile."

Page 186 "around his waist was the pistol belt with two canteen pouches...with six magazines of ammunition. Four fragmentation grenades hung from his belt. Strapped to his left calf was a bayonet."

Page 576 "The recon team moved fifty meters upriver...They carried no rifles, no radio. Each man carried three frags and a bayonet."

The Hill

Page 152 "Inside the green pack were food, poncho, poncho liner, jungle sweater, shaving kit, block of C-4...weapons-cleaning kit, extra socks, extra water, extra ammo, claymore mine, trip flare, and waterproofed bag, which held his letters, wallet, and writing paper. Attached to the outside of his rucksack was an entrenching tool...On his fighting harness and across his body were three bandoleers of full M-16 magazines, two canteens, and a canteen cover with four fragmentation grenades, a smoke grenade, a first-aid pouch, and a compass."

Page 153 "On his fighting harness...a canteen cover with four fragmentation grenades..."

11: Grenades

Brennan's War

Page 52 “‘Get Back!’ He pulled the pin from a grenade and tossed it into the bunker. Silence. He threw in another, and...nothing happened...The constant rain had damaged our grenade fuses.”

A Distant Challenge

Page 65 “The hand grenade lost much of its usefulness in the...jungle, and a lot of men were wounded by their own grenades when they hit a tree limb or bush.”

Page 261 “The hand grenade (frag) is the principal weapon to break contact with. When making contact at night, answer the call with frags...”

Iwo Jima

Page 155 “Kolbmayer pulled the pin on a grenade one night, then dropped it. He jumped from his foxhole and was instantly killed by the Marine in the next hole. ‘With the goddam Japs jumpin’ around all night what the hell could I do?’”

Page 178 “A grenade fell in the hole. Willis threw it back. He threw back seven more of them, and then his luck, far overextended, gave out. The grenade went off in his hand, killing him.”

SAS: Secret War in South-East Asia

Page 258 “‘I don’t know if you’ve heard a grenade coming through the trees?’ ...and in case you haven’t, it goes swish, smack, thud as it hits foliage and branches. Hardy shouted, ‘Grenade!’ and dived off the track...”

The 13th Valley

Page 542 “Jax...seized a grenade from his belt. ‘Frag,’ he whispered. Hoover and Marko immediately grabbed two each...The sound of the mortar team chattering in Vietnamese came from their...front. ‘Throw two, then hit it,’ Jax whispered...’Go.’ They cocked and threw...Jax, Marko and Hoover each immediately depinned and threw their second fragmentation grenade. Then they hit the ground. Marko’s first frag went beyond the NVA, Jax’ to the left, Hoover’s also behind. All exploded simultaneously. An enemy soldier screamed. The second three frags exploded. There was scurrying in the brush, there was the sound of a body being dragged. Then all was silent.”

Charlie Mike

Page 15 “Ben and Sox sat against the wall, taping fragmentation grenades.”

Editor: I believe they are using paper masking tape to protect the fuses against dampness.

The Last Run

Page 12 “he heard the distinctive ‘ping-pop’ of a grenade...He spun around...to see Robbins throw himself to the ground after tossing the grenade. The green sphere sailed only ten feet, hit the bamboo, and bounced back to the side of the prone soldier. Wade screamed...as he threw himself backward...”

Page 119 ““Never throw grenade if branches are close overhead. The grenade not kill Communists...it kill you. Toss grenade like...softball...Underhand. It don’t hit branches this way. You must yell ‘grenade’ so comrades know to get down.””

The Hill

Page 148 “PFC...Deets was dead. He accidentally killed himself. He’d hooked two grenades to his harness, and a vine had caught one of the pins when he walked through a streambed.”

12: Helicopters

A Distant Challenge

Page 5 “The problem of manifesting was simplified by using the ‘shoe tag’ rather than the manifest sheet. The shoe tag consisted of four equal sections and each section contained the man’s name, rank, serial number, and chalk number. The jumpmasters received the first part of the tag, the loadmasters part two, the battalion S1 part three, while the men retained part four. Last minute changes in chalk assignments were made quickly and easily by removing the individual’s part from one chalk and transferring it to his newly assigned chalk; no erasures or additions were required.”

Editor: This technique is for parachute manifests, but could be used for helicopter manifests also.

Page 305 “Emphasis has been placed on panel markers instead of smoke to mark landing zones during resupply flights and avoid advance notice to the enemy of an aircraft’s approach.”

Infantry in Vietnam

Page 179 “A...reconnaissance of the landing zone did point...that an enemy unit had covered the clearing with long bamboo poles stuck into the ground as anti-helicopter devices...”

SAS: Secret War in South-East Asia

Page 61 “resupply aircraft...was due...at the appointed hour they sent aloft an orange marker balloon which floated miniscule above the tree-tops...”

Charlie Mike

Page 31 “The helicopter dropped quickly...Grady jumped into the stalks at a full run. The others followed. Within seconds the unburdened helicopter was gone.

Grady ran for the treeline, twenty yards away...He spun around as the others ran past and fell close to him, forming a small circle with their feet inside and their bodies and weapons facing out. He couldn’t see anything but the grass, but seeing didn’t matter. He wasn’t looking, he was listening...Grady knew this landing had been perfect. No one, unless he was very close, would know they had landed. That’s why they listened. If anyone was near, he’d come to investigate. They’d wait ten minutes, completely still.”

13: Mortars and Indirect Fire Support

The Bridge at Dong Ha

Page 37 “he sighted down the crater’s long axis and took his compass reading of the direction of fire. Then he moved to another new hole, then another, and plotted the readings on his tactical map. The lines intersected north of Con Thien, thirteen miles to the northwest.”

A Distant Challenge

Page 70 “The tripflares were...set throughout the...area, preferably along trails...used by the enemy...When a flare was tripped...mortars were immediately called in...”

Infantry in Vietnam

Page 169 “A cry, ‘short round,’ came from the 1st Platoon...But panic was averted by the immediate yell of Platoon Sergeant Leslie Crawford—he had recognized this to be an enemy mortar round...Crawford’s quick thinking foiled the enemy attempt to get the supporting fires lifted...Company C, just a few days before, had encountered the same trick.”

Page 178 “In Vietnam, where...trees...fail to give...clearance...units have been prone to leave their...mortars behind and depend on artillery and close air support...The problem of using mortars...has been...compounded by the lack of...information to pinpoint the enemy, plus the danger of leaving the...mortar section without...security. Yet, on occasion, the mortars...have made the difference between success and failure for a number of units.”

The 13th Valley

Page 294 “An illumination flare popped...Brooks hated calling...illumination. The light fell indiscriminately, silhouetting enemy and friendly forces...Usually US forces NDPed on high ground and the illumination actually helped the NVA...”

14: Movement

A Distant Challenge

Page 64 “Often the companies operated as a unit with their platoons within 15 to 30 minutes of one another, and with security elements covering the main body, front, flanks, and rear. Too often, company commanders overlooked flank and rear security when it was impossible to have flank security because of the heavy jungle vegetation; in this case the unit moved in a single file, with the point element preceding the main body by about 200 meters.

A rifle company stopped every so often to send out patrols in all directions. Not only was this a good security measure, it was also a good method of search in the jungle. Special emphasis had to be paid to the rear. On the border, the NVA developed a habit of having a small reconnaissance party following our units to keep tabs.

There were a couple of ways we used to combat this technique - one was by dropping off a small ambush patrol...The other method was to have a patrol buttonhook, move off the trail, double-back some distance, and then move back along the trail.”

Page 179 “The US soldier is very poor when moving through the terrain.”

Editor: Quoted by an NVA Lieutenant.

Infantry in Vietnam

Page 111 “The company had been moving in its usual company formation with two platoons forward in column, followed by the Weapons Platoon and the other rifle platoon; in effect, the company formed four separate files moving parallel and adjacent to each other. In the dense jungle, the files were seldom more than 50 meters apart.”

Page 113 “A point squad had been pushed well out to the front...Captain Brownlee had had the squad halt at frequent intervals until the company could close on it.”

Page 124 “Lieutenant Oakes concentrated on...finding the enemy before the enemy found him. He would move approximately 300 meters...employing a point element to his front and security to his flanks, and then halt and form a hasty perimeter. From this perimeter he would send out five-man fire teams to the front and flanks in a cloverleaf pattern; the fire teams would move out from 50 to 200 meters- depending on the terrain...to search for signs of any enemy soldiers; if nothing were found, the fire teams would return and the platoon would move forward another 300 meters and repeat the process.”

The 13th Valley

Page 456 “Behind the point Alpha rose, moving now in three silent, unequal, parallel columns. 1st Plt and the Co CP led down the center. The formation looked like a wide based bi-pod. 2d Plt moved south 50 meters toward the road and followed 1st by 100 meters. The formation gave Alpha partial sweep advantages plus surprise drags to catch enemy followers and flanking and maneuver elements should they run head-on into the enemy.”

Page 605 “They form a three man point...These three-man points have the machine gunners at center, riflemen to each side, grenade launcher just behind ready to lob rounds over the point.

Charlie Mike

Page 64 “Meeks stopped...then slowly sank to his knees while motioning toward his sergeant to get down...He quickly sank into the green-yellow jungle floor...he heard the gentle slap of rubber-tire sandals. The slapping became louder. A slight but distinct sloshing noise could also be heard: water in partially filled canteens...He...concentrated on the...noise, which by now was fading...He pushed the selector switch back on safety.

Meeks had done well. He obviously had that intangible gift, that other sense, that marked the naturals, the hunters, the killers.”

The Last Run

Page 7 ““You never push a selector with your thumb. That click you just made could be heard fifty feet away. Hold the damn thing and turn it slowly and it won’t make noise.’ Wade...pointed his finger... ‘And don’t ever take your weapon off safe until you have a target. The point man is the only man who has his weapons on ‘auto’. You’ll shoot somebody if you trip or get spooked.’”

Page 164 “They...found enough dense vegetation to laager in the standard wheel formation - sitting back on their packs shoulder-to-shoulder and facing out in a circle. One at a time, each man would watch for an hour and hold the radio to make periodic commo checks.”

15: Patrol Base Operations

A Distant Challenge

Page 21 “Stand to was complete and the CO had dispatched local security patrols. All personnel were rolling up their gear, eating breakfast and preparing their equipment for the day’s operations. The CO had requested a CH47 to lift out the company’s rucksacks, allowing the men to move unburdened during the day.”

Page 65 “it was good policy...to halt at about 1600 hours to give the men sufficient time before dark to prepare their night defensive perimeter. Digging in was an absolute must. At the very least, individual prone fighting positions were prepared. Security in the form of OPs and LPs was another cardinal rule...new commanders...seemed reluctant to put out two or three men 100 to 200 meters from the company perimeter.”

Page 72 “One method...was to pick up the...packs and extra equipment each morning and return them to the unit with the evening resupply. This allowed the units to maneuver during the day with only their combat load...”

Page 88 “Each man was required to dig a fighting position each night on the perimeter...The LP was sent out at dusk and consisted of seven men, including the artillery reconnaissance sergeant.”

Page 224 “The platoon used artillery defensive concentrations...dug deep, carefully camouflaged its positions, and conducted limited local patrolling around its base. Movement during daylight and helicopter overflights were forbidden...This platoon normally stayed out six days and was picked up by helicopter after its sister element was inserted in another area.”

Infantry in Vietnam

Page 92 “Bowie received a radio call...notifying him...that a Viet Cong regiment was located four kilometers northeast of Bowie’s perimeter...Bowie...alerted all his companies and told them to conduct a stand to at 0530; this would get the battalion fully prepared for the early morning hours, when the Viet Cong normally attacked.”

Personal Firepower

Page 120 “a patrol of the 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry...was returning to its lines. The patrol leader had been instructed to return along a...paddy dike that led to the platoon’s perimeter. At night all dikes looked alike, and there were dozens of dikes. The patrol leader had arranged to have a guide to be stationed at the end of the correct dike, and with his Small Starlight Scope he was able to detect the guide at a distance of 300 meters...Without the Starlight Scope they would have had to guess which dike was the correct one, in the process they might have been mistaken for a VC force moving about in the night.

In defensive situations, the light-intensifying night vision devices were even more effectively used. Of 127 men interviewed, 118 reported that they had used their night vision devices to spot enemy forces during defensive operations. The Small Starlight Scope was used at listening posts...

A typical defensive employment...occurred...when an element of the 173rd Airborne Brigade...was on guard duty against enemy attack. At 0100 hours, under light conditions equal to a half moon, an observation post night vision device operator detected and identified six enemy troops moving along an adjacent ridge line. He called artillery fire onto this target. At the completion of the fire mission,

the operator, looking through his Starlight scope, was able to count the dead bodies...men of the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry...were conducting a mission to secure Route 19...For six consecutive nights VC forces tried to infiltrate the battalion's command post area. Each time the VC were detected under lighting conditions varying from a new moon to a quarter moon. Significantly, they were noticed before they got close enough to throw hand grenades. Once the enemy had been spotted, the observation post called for illumination flares and mortar fire."

The 13th Valley

Page 220 "The LPs had waited until dark to move...into their positions. Each team had a PRC-25, their weapons, ammo, a watch and little else."

Charlie Mike

Page 38 "Within its confines they formed a tight circle and lay down, listening. Five minutes passed before Grady rose and took off his ruck...'We'll break up into three teams...One-hour shifts. If we gotta run, the rally point is the base of the stream, where it meets the valley floor."

Page 39 "Grady reached out and carefully broke two lower branches off a plant in front of him to get a better field of vision. He then placed his CAR close to his body and mentally pictured grasping it quickly. Meeks watched as his sergeant placed two M-26 grenades and one smoke grenade in front of himself and straightened the pull pins...'If we're compromised, I throw these, and you shoot the gas, then we di di.'"

The Last Run

Page 260 "'The Third Platoon is going to recon the third area. It's broken down with four team recon zones...Once we get in we'll establish a patrol base and break up into two-man recon teams. We'll clover-leaf out and return to the patrol base. If you see or hear something, get your ass back to the patrol base and wait until we all get back. This is gonna be slow and tiring'"

16: Prisoners

A Distant Challenge

Page 237 “Prisoners are important sources of intelligence...and defectors are even more valuable...persons detained should be handled firmly but without undue harshness.”

Charlie Mike

Page 2 “Grady...tightened, realizing his friend was about to turn a body over. Bartlett hadn’t followed search procedure. He didn’t have his pistol at the soldier’s head, and he had not pulled the hands free to ensure that the Vietnamese held no weapon.”

Page 18 “I should have searched the...man, I would have followed procedure and pulled his hand with the pistol free...”

Page 274 “‘Security,’ yelled Grady...Grady waited for his men to move into position...Grady...quickly turned a soldier over onto his back...searched the shirt pockets and pants, then pulled off the soldier’s pack and emptied it...He tossed clothes to the side, keeping the plastic-wrapped letters and notebooks...He picked up the soldier’s AK-47 and moved on...”

17: Tracking

Brennan's War

Page 35 “The path was wide, with many sandal prints in the mud, all heading in the direction that we were traveling...already we were finding black telephone wires hidden in the bushes. Someplace here were units big enough to have telephone hookups. Sam...radioed the...gunships. He told us not to cut the wire yet, because the NVA might not know we were on the trail.”

Page 61 “Sometimes we would find fresh bootprints on the trails and would suppose that other Americans had been there. Then one day we saw the new NVA jungle boots and realized that the pattern on the soles was very similar to our own.”

Page 260 “On several occasions, we almost surprised groups of NVA eating rice...They would hear our noisy approach and run away. One day, the platoon crossed a trail where many people had been walking only minutes before. No one noticed.”

Page 264 “We had been on patrol for two days. Around us were new jungle camps where the NVA had been eating mackerel from cans with Saigon labels. Coca-Cola bottles littered the camps. My platoon crossed a trail where men had passed so recently that grass was still snapping back from the direction they had taken. I showed my squad leaders a rest camp beside the trail, then took them aside.

‘What does this grass tell you?’

Only blank looks and awkward silence.

‘It’s wet, so gooks can walk by and bend it without the stems breaking. It’ll bend back in the direction they’re going and then snap back for about fifteen minutes. What about those Ho Chi Minh sandal prints in the mud?’

‘...Looks like maybe a squad came by...’

‘Three or four at most. The water is still seeping back, so they passed here quite recently. Most of our bootprints haven’t started filling up yet. You can learn a lot from trails. What the Charlies are eating, what they’re wearing, what kind of weapons they’re carrying, how many there are, and where they’re headed. You’ve got to know the signs and keep on your toes.’

They began to look for the signs...”

Page 270 ““Roger. We have a trail with fresh Ho Chi Minh prints and animal snares. Signs suggest base camp nearby. Request permission to recon the area...””

A Distant Challenge

Page 27 “When he pointed out the tunnel to me, I couldn’t believe my eyes. I could see only a small pile of leaves next to a bamboo clump...But then I studied the pile, and ...began to see the slight outlines of a small square about 18 inches on a side and to notice a small depression around the edges of this square looking as windblown as Nature...could make it.”

Page 30 “Visual indicators often disclosed the general area of the hole...Worn places on the bamboo...used as handholds were good visual indicators. Another was a small trail...into a bamboo clump. Easily seen...was cut bamboo. Frequently the enemy would dig holes under partially harvested bamboo clumps.

A good visual indicator...was a slight depression...This depression often marked...a trap door...The surest of all...was the ever present air hole...these bamboo breathing tubes always revealed the tunnel below.”

Page 33 “the soldier learns what to look for: the indicators - a game trail, worn and cut bamboo, an air hole, human feces, a depression, fresh food, a lone individual. All trigger a mental alert in the curious...and tell him that the enemy is not far away.”

Page 173 “When we arrive at a perpendicular trail, we break branches to show the direction. In thick vegetation we cut bamboo stalks and place them about waist-high in the foliage with the pointed top showing the direction.”

Editor: This quote is from an NVA Lieutenant.

Page 302 “...common...indicators of the presence of an enemy base camp... Heavy trail usage. Secondary trails branching out from main trails. Streams near large trails. Boobytraps along trails. Refuse left by the enemy (he can be guilty of this, too). Pigs, chickens, cows, and water buffalo in the area. Well-tended cultivated crops. Signs of wood cutting. Cultivated fields in a sparsely populated area. Large quantities of drying or stored rice.”

The Green Beret

Page 52 “...every team member was...trained in interpreting and reading the signs left by the enemy. Even the most...inconsequential find might yield...valuable information. On one occasion a recon team discovered numerous piles of fresh elephant dung...Further investigation...revealed recently abandoned gourds and small rifle pits. Piecing all evidence together, it was estimated that a VC force of approximately battalion strength, using elephants for transportation, had occupied the site within the last 48 hours. From the direction of the tracks leading away from the position, the team was able to plot the route taken by the enemy...”

Footprints were another...source of intelligence, and recons were taught to identify the number of people in an enemy patrol, the direction of movement, and even the type of load being carried. Under normal conditions, spaced footprints with unusually deep toe marks indicated that the person leaving the prints was carrying a heavy load. Team members were also trained to take into account the effects of wind, rain and sunlight on tracks.”

Infantry in Vietnam

Page 128 “The area around the creek abounded with signs of recent use - the tell-tale signs of the deep tread of the ‘Ho Chi Minh sandals’ were everywhere. Viet Cong soldiers...had been at the creek!”

On the Border With Crook

Page 26 “The old rule of the frontier...amounted to this: ‘When you see Apache “sign,” be keeferful; “n” when you don’ see nary sign, be more keeferful.’”

Page 31 “Manuel Duran...was an Apache himself, and none of the tricks of the trade had the slightest effect...He looked over the ground carefully. Ah! here is a stone which has been overturned in its place, and here some one has cut that branch of mesquite; and here-look! we have it, the shod-hoof track

of one of Israel's mules!...Patient search, watching every blade of grass, every stone or bush...took the command...right across the range at its highest point.”

Page 39 “there was no difficulty in getting a band of expert trailers to go out...and...make search for the missing man. His foot-prints were plainly discernible for quite a distance in the hard sand and gravel, until they led to a spring...where one could plainly read the “sign” that the wounded man had stopped, knelt down, drunk, washed his wound, torn off a small piece of his blouse, perhaps as a bandage, and written his name on a rock in his own blood.”

Page 125 “The expertness of the Apache in all that relates to tracking...has been an occasion of astonishment to all...He will follow through grass, over sand or rock, or through...scrub oak, up and down...the steepest ridges, traces so faint that to the keenest-eyed American they do not appear at all.

Conversely, he is fiendishly dexterous in the skill with which he conceals his own line of march when a pursuing enemy is to be thrown off the track...he will dodge...in all directions, boxing the compass, doubling like a fox, scattering his party the moment a piece of rocky ground is reached over which it would...be difficult to follow. Instead of moving in file, his party will...break into skirmishing order, covering a broad space and diverging at the most unexpected moment from the primitive direction, and not perhaps reuniting for miles.”

SAS: Secret War in South-East Asia

Page 1 “Their vigilance was occasioned by an old camp...they had found...when a...survey...had revealed much of interest. There were bamboo lean-tos...Significantly, these had no roofs...which soldiers could more readily improvise with their ponchos; and the camp's military nature was confirmed by labels on rusted tins stating...”Indonesian Army...” The time since last occupation, six months or so, was given by the length of new shoots from cut saplings, an inch a fortnight give or take allowances for...species, altitude and...rainfall...”

Page 3 “only the slightest clues could...warn of his presence...far slighter...than a fag-end, which would stand out like a motorway sign to a trained jungle soldier...Thomson pressed all his senses into service; his eyes to look...for as small an abnormality as a single leaf hanging awkwardly; his ears to detect the least sound not made by nature, and his nose to catch the faintest whiff of...hair cream...The SAS did not use the stuff, of course...”

Page 73 “Creighton spotted their tracks leading north...The jungle floor is rarely thick with leaves...and footprints tend to show clearly...A body of men following each other soften the ground...and prints show better. Someone is bound to kick and mark a rotten log, snap a twig or bruise a leaf, even if he avoids...dropping a toffee paper...”

...he listened...to the insect noises, which always diminished when men were moving; no sign there, nor did any man-made smell hang in the...air. He checked...that the cobwebs suspended horizontally across the track were still intact...

Some prints were of bare feet, but many were booted and of a pattern; soldiers...and heavily laden ones, for they trod deeply. How many? Creighton...took an extra long stride...to one side...and knelt to...count the footfalls within it. He checked heels and toes separately so as not to miss any and took the highest number, 35; then he halved it, because each man would have stepped twice within the measured distance, and added an estimate allowance for prints obliterated by those behind; say, 20 men.

When had they passed? That it had not been this morning was confirmed by the edges of the prints being blurred by rain, and it had not rained since yesterday. Creighton's experience gave it...two if not three days. When he looked for snapped shoots and bruised leaves, they still exuded sap...and gave him the same time-scale.”

Page 81 “It was a big camp...they estimated that 100...soldiers had stayed there; regular troops probably and...quite efficient to judge by the professional siting, tactical layout, and tidiness...All...signs

pointed to the enemy having left...two days before; but the way he had gone was clear enough, a heavily pounded track leading southwestwards.”

Page 97 “he...followed the enemy...finding the way without difficulty by the sweet-papers and fag-ends that littered the track, one interesting...brand not sold in Sabah.”

Page 133 “soldiers...were already engaged in changing the tread-pattern of their directly-moulded boot-soles from standard British Army to Indonesian...”

Page 136 “The lead scout would change every hour to maintain alertness.”

Editor: British terms, sweet-papers and toffee papers are candy wrappers, fag-ends are cigarette butts, motorway is a highway, tins are tin cans, and fortnight is 14 days.

The 13th Valley

Page 194 “At point Whiteboy slowed...With each pace he looked twice from side to side for traces of enemy. He searched up and down for booby trap trip wires. He examined the trail for fresh human footprints.”

Page 477 “At drag Pop and Doc Hayes attempted to obliterate the signs of seventy-six pairs of GI jungle boots crossing the road. Then they attempted to seal the bamboo tunnel.”

Page 602 “the Americans resupply by helicopter and thus must give away their positions. We can pick them up at their LZs, adjust while we follow them and then hit them whenever possible.”

The Last Run

Page 5 “He was fine-tuning his senses for survival. Chirping insects, birds squawking in flight, wind rustling the branches in the canopy - all were absorbed and stored for reference. Every sound, smell, and sight, all constantly changing with time of day and weather conditions, was important.

Experience had taught him many lessons. Once, the absence of crickets chirping on one side of a trail had warned him of an NVA ambush. Another time, two shriveled ferns among a stand of lush, vibrant companions gave away a sniper’s camouflaged position. The jungle had to be understood.”

Page 72 “We’re going to leave a fake trail, then double back and head south.”

Page 131 “‘you just completed your classes on smells...the enemy ain’t superman...He eats different than we do, so he smells different. His shit smells different and the food he cooks smells different. When he’s in the bush, he don’t know you’re there so he acts slack. You can usually smell him first or see his tracks or signs. So far, you’ve been using sight and smell to find him. Tonight you’re going to learn to hear him.’”

Page 132 “Thumper whispered...’Okay, what were the last sounds we heard...?’
‘One man walking down the trail going east to west.’
‘Good. How do you know he was on trail...?’
‘There was no noise of branches or vegetation being disturbed.’
‘Good...was he lookin’ for us?’
‘Don’t think so. He was movin’ too quick to be huntin’.’
‘Right...was he wearing boots or...sandals?...’”

Page 167 “Rose whispered faintly, ‘Somebody’s got a fire.’
Wade sniffed the air and caught the faint...odor of burning bamboo. It was coming from the south.”

Page 261 “‘The dinks won’t know we’re there...Check the wind constantly for their cooking fires and voices. Move slow and keep an eye out’”

Page 266 “Rose had vomited...The smell...was enough to gag a maggot...Wade lay...as his men fell to the ground in the standard wheel formation...He didn’t want to smell his vomit-soaked fatigues...He wanted to find the closest...stream so everyone could clean up. They couldn’t begin the mission until they’d gotten rid of the horrid smell; the dinks would detect them a klick away.”

Page 276 “Rose knelt down to touch the ridges of a footprint. The impression left by the heel was still damp. The person was small and had an unusually wide foot. It had to have been a Montagnard. Vietnamese regulars wore sandals or Chicom boots...”

‘A Yard walked down this trail less than an hour ago,’ whispered Rose.”

Editor: The Montagnards are a remote tribe of Vietnam, Chicom is Chinese Communist.

The Hill

Page 49 “What kind of tracks are these?...Look at this carpet of leaves...see how they’re not broken or crumbly? Now look at this one and this one. See the difference? They’ve been stepped on.”

Page 157 “He could sense...the killer was close...When he had lain down he had noticed that the grass was bent toward the east. The sniper had run...back and turned north at the clump of bamboo. Ty...lay down...at the base of the bamboo thicket. The sniper had stopped running when he had made his turn. The distance between his strides was much shorter. The path was clearly evident for twenty yards and suddenly ended as if the man had picked up his feet and flown.

...Ty had seen the faint outline and wanted to get behind the trapdoor...There was no latch or handle. The cover was simply fitted to the spider hole...

‘Nance, how did you know where they were?’

‘Sir, the first one left the cover to his hole beside his position too long and flattened the grass, leaving an imprint. When I lay down, I could see where the moisture had built up on the grass.’

‘But how did you know there were two of them?’

‘The rule is, where there’s one, there’s two. The dinks don’t leave men by themselves...they’re like us.’”

Page 180 “Ty smelled it first, the dusty smell of grain. The...wind carried the distinctive odor like a warning.”

Page 182 “The firing lane was invisible when walking by, but when on the ground it was like a miniature highway. The VC had cut and cleared only the lower branches and ferns, making a small firing tunnel.”

Page 184 “Ty gagged...He’d smelled that odor before and it sickened him. The countless fires the Viet-cong had squatted beside permeated their bodies and uniforms with the smoky, fishy smell.”

Page 221 “Ty smelled the freshly tilled soil and brought his head up...He couldn’t see the bunker but he knew it was there...Hammonds lifted his head, taking a deep breath, and immediately lowered himself. ‘Fresh-turned dirt. Yeah, I smell it’”

Page 223 “we have dinks following us...our platoon sent out a clearing patrol around the company’s perimeter, and I saw sandal prints over the ones we had made going into the perimeter. There are four of them on our tail.”

Page 226 “His senses had become so finely tuned to the rain forest that he felt as if he were part of it. Day after day, walking alone twenty-five meters in front of the formation, the plants, trees, scents, winds, and light of the forest had become his closest friends...Cigarette smoke ruined his ability to smell for a day...The NVA were not as good as everyone thought. They made mistakes. Some had cut trees or bamboo too close to their positions. Others had collected the dead wood from around their positions for fires. Footprints, latrines placed upwind, freshly dug dirt, marks on trees from climbing - just one sign was all he needed. They had made their biggest mistake in leaving their defensive positions for him to study. They were victims of SOPs, just like the Army.”

Page 227 “He knew the enemy...He knew what they did and what they ate...He saw a man’s footprints and became that man. He could tell if the soldier was carrying a pack or limped, and he could tell if he carried a rifle or not. If he carried a rifle, his footprint on one side would be slightly deeper. When a soldier relieved himself, the spot he chose and the way he stood told him if the soldier was tired or fresh. A tired man wouldn’t walk very far from the trail...He never used soap to clean himself because of the lingering smell, and he hadn’t brought along fresh uniforms for the same reason.”

18: Water Crossing

Once a Warrior King

Page 15 “we came to our canal. It turned out to be over head deep and quite wide...there was a swift current. We had to get...to the other side with our radios, machine guns, ammo boxes, and other gear. We couldn't swim across with it all, so we made field expedient rafts from our ponchos and...tree branches.

One of the men swam across...pulling a rope...He secured the rope to a tree...and moved off...to...look around. He...gave the all-clear sign. One by one we ...grabbed the rope, and pulled ourselves and our...rafts to the other side...the men, as they got out of the water...moved...into the jungle and established a...perimeter...”

The 13th Valley

Page 383 “Brooks orchestrated the river crossing. He sent 2d Plt's 3d Sqd upriver thirty meters and directed them to stay ten meters away from the riverbank. 2d Sqd he sent downriver. 1st Sqd he held to be sent straight ahead. Between the squads he sent the extra gunteams. ‘Don't approach the water,’ he emphasized to every squad...The squads worked to their positions then sat and watched and waited. Brooks made them...observe for...fifteen minutes.

‘Move up,’ El Paso radioed on Brooks' command. All elements moved to within viewing distance of the water and sat again, still concealed by valley floor vegetation. Again, for fifteen minutes they observed. They watched the river, the near bank and the far...

The security squads up and down river set up half-arc perimeters with the machine guns facing the river and the back of the arcs open to the column. The machine gunners opened...the...legs of the 60s and laid their ammo out in preparation for a fight. Behind them thumpermen mock registered their grenade launchers. Riflemen opened tiny holes in the grass to aim through.

‘Let's go,’ ...1st Sqd and the company CP and all of 2d Plt moved to the river's edge. The column moved up behind them. Old Pop Randolph...slipped out of his ruck, removed his boonie hat and web gear and laid his weapon down...he waded into the water, cautious...the bottom dropped and Pop was over his head, paddling...

Baiez had a coil of light nylon cord to which he had attached a weight...He recoiled the line loosely on the ground then threw the weight across the river...

Pop retrieved it. On the company's side they attached the heavier rope...Pop pulled the line across, anchored it and signaled for the troops to come. One at a time, in full gear, the men waded in...pulled hand-over-hand to the far side...The weight of their equipment forced each soldier under...after Shaw had nearly drowned when he lost the rope, several boonierats stripped...and acted as lifeguards and guides. On the north side each man opened his weapon to drain the barrel of water, then disappeared in to the grass enlarging the...perimeter...Ten minutes later they were forced into another delay...The boonierats had...been assaulted by the leeches as soon as they had crossed.”

19: Weapons

Brennan's War

Page 218 "The NVA dodged from tree to tree like Indians. The leader ran straight at us in a crouch, firing short burst from his AK. I took careful aim and squeezed off a five-round burst. The leader flopped on his back beside a rubber tree, legs kicking and jerking...I emptied the rest of the magazine into the rubber trees at ground level. I had learned a hard lesson from the NVA. Always shoot the leader."

A Distant Challenge

Page 66 "In the jungle, most...engagements...were at...15 to 20 feet, and in this terrain, our point men liked...the shotgun. It was an excellent close-in weapon..."

Page 73 "Emphasis should be placed on well-aimed, semiautomatic fire - volume does not replace accuracy. The majority of our soldiers tended to shoot high at night. This...can only be overcome by additional training...The M16 rifle is an ideal weapon for jungle warfare; it is lightweight...and the individual...can carry a large amount of ammunition...In most cases...weapon malfunctions were due to poor maintenance procedures."

The Green Berets' Guide to Outdoor Survival

Page 2 "Cocking one leg keeps back straight when shooting prone. Result: reduced wobble."

Page 32 "in over 50% of quick combat conflicts, the shooters miss by shooting too high. For you, putting a round-on-the-ground acts as a sighter and tells you how high to elevate..."

Once a Warrior King

Page 61 "I heard the...coughing sound of an M-79 grenade launcher...fired...all the Cong soldiers were hunkered down deep in their hole...I couldn't even see tops of heads. Our man with the grenade launcher was good. The next round landed right in the pit...The men with me all saw the same thing, so they almost immediately were on their feet and charging out toward the crater. They didn't tell anybody, they didn't coordinate any lifting of fire...They fired from their hips as they ran toward the crater..."

Personal Firepower

Page 5 "US troops discovered that the enemy was more likely to break cover when reconned by fire by a hail of 40mm high-explosive grenades rather than M-16 rifle fire."

Page 104 "If was generally believed that the enemy was more likely to expose himself when initially engaged with 40mm high-explosive(HE) rounds rather than rifle fire. Personnel armed with the XM-203 normally fired 40mm HE rounds at a suspected target and then covered the area with their M-16 rifle while waiting for the enemy to break and run...This technique was effective, resulting in several confirmed kills during the evaluation period.' In one case, a group of VC were surprised on a trail and one shot killed three men. Bunkers were another common target. Enemy soldiers were usually engaged at

less than 50 meters by the point man in a patrol. And in one instance, a point man killed a VC at less than 10 meters with a round of 40mm XM-576E1 buckshot.”

Editor: An example of a squad-sized combined arms technique.

SAS: Secret War in South-East Asia

Page 98 “the Gurkhas...eyed these bearded...guerrillas with an interest that was at first critical; how could they shoot straight unshaven? But their rifles were as clean as the Gurkhas’ own...”

Page 194 “the patrol made their last-minute preparations, test-firing their SLRs and returning them to the armoury at headquarters where a final briefing was held...Early the next morning a...trailer arrived with the weapons...and took them to the airport for ...passage to Lundu...But as soon as Pete Scholey was handed an SLR, he knew it was not his own...After all, his weapon was part of himself...it was useless to tell him that this one was identical...”

Page 205 “Three shots followed on the instant...A curt, angry expletive brought Large’s attention to Scholey who was struggling with his rifle...which now failed to repeat after the first round. He...applied himself with reflex dexterity to the stoppage drill.”

Seals in Action

Page 242 “A variety of shotguns were initially used...the SEALs settled on...the Ithaca Model 37 as their primary fighting shotgun.”

Charlie Mike

Page 38 “he noticed Meeks open the breech of his 79 and take out the flat-nosed canister shell of buckshot, then replace it with a long gray round – gas. I’ll be damned, Grady thought...Only old vets would have thought of gas. It was the right round to select; if they were seen and had to run, tear gas would slow and disorient the dinks and temporarily put up a smoke screen.”

Page 206 “many...men had taped their rifle magazines together...’This looks good. They do it in all the commando movies. The only problem is, your weapon is designed for the weight of only one magazine. All of you who have taped your mags...take your weapons to the armoury and have the springs checked.”

Glossary

60	See M-60 .
AK-47	7.62mm Automatic Rifle.
C-4	Plastic explosive compound.
C-rations	Canned food.
CAR	CAR-15 Colt Automatic Rifle. A shortened version of the M-16 .
CH-47	Cargo Helicopter.
chopper	Helicopter.
Claymore	Mine. See M18A1 .
Cong	See Viet Cong .
CO	Commanding Officer.
CP	Command Post.
det cord	Detonation Cord. Explosive cord used with demolitions.
di di	To run. Vietnamese.
drag	The soldier at the end of a patrol column
HE	High Explosive.
IR	Infrared.
KIA	Killed In Action.
LMG	Light Machine Gun.
LP	Listening Post.
LZ	Landing Zone.
M-16	5.56mm Automatic Rifle.
M-18A1	Claymore Mine. An anti-personnel mine containing 800 steel balls.
M-203	40mm Grenade Launcher attached to an M-16 .
M-60	General Purpose Machine Gun. Also an igniter used with demolitions.
M-79	Shotgun-like 40mm Grenade Launcher. Also known as the thumper .
MA	Mechanical Ambush.
NDP	Night Defensive Position.
NVA	North Vietnamese Army.
OP	Observation Post.
Plt	Platoon.
point man	The first man in a patrol column.
PRC-25	VHF radio.
pungi sticks	Sharpened sticks of bamboo designed to injure a man who steps on them.
RTO	Radio Telephone Operator.
ruck	Rucksack. A military backpack.
SEALs	Sea Air Land. U.S. Navy special warfare unit.
slack man	The second man in a patrol column behind the point man.
SLR	7.62mm Automatic Rifle.
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure.
Starlight Scope	Infrared night vision device.
thumper	See M-79 .
thumperman	The man carrying the M-79 grenade launcher. See thumper .
VC	See Viet Cong.
Viet Cong	The communist guerrillas of Vietnam.
WIA	Wounded In Action.

British terms from SAS: Secret War in South-East Asia are defined immediately below the entries.