WAR
STORIES

Infantry Techniques II

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Project Leatherneck
2nd Battalion, 5th Marines
Camp Pendleton, California 92055
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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, please contact:

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WAR STORIES: Infantry Techniques II is a collection of extracts from books and articles on infantry combat. The purpose of this collection is to generate training ideas that can be used by the reader in his own unit.

Each extract was selected to demonstrate a technique that may be useful to the foot-mobile infantryman. The reader is encouraged to check the reference in order to gain a more complete understanding of the context in which a given technique was used. Specialized techniques that do not apply to regular infantry units were not included.

Most 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.

*Editor's notes are few and far between.*

B.B.M.
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1: Ambush

Clear and Present Danger

p608 ‘Click-click-click. Get ready, Ramiriz ordered. Across the line, the riflemen snugged their weapons into their shoulders...Safeties went off. In the center of the line, the captain wrapped his hand around a length of communications wire. It was fifty yards long, and attached to it’s other end was a tin can containing a few pebbles. Slowly, carefully, he pulled the wire taut. Then he yanked it hard. The sudden sound froze the moment in time...The men in front of the light-fighters turned instinctively toward the sound in their midst, away from the unknown threat that lay to their front and their flanks, away form the fingers that had just begun to press down. The moment ended with the white muzzle flashes of the squad... “Everybody move out,” Ramirez called over the radios. The drill was the same across the line. One man from each pair took off at once, racing fifty meters uphill before stopping at a preselected spot. The SAWs, which had thus far fired only short bursts as though they were mere rifles, now fired long ones to cover the disengagement.’

The End of the Line

p50 ‘Now, trying desperately to avoid...firepower-the enemy had refined ambush to an art form. With careful camouflage, rigid fire discipline, and proper timing, even small enemy units could inflict heavy casualties-and then run before the bombs and shells arrived.’

L.R.R.P.: The Professional

p11 ‘Ambushes were set where trails crossed water, knowing that the VC would pause to rest or fill their canteens.’

p11 ‘Trails that showed evidence of recent movement were staked out and mined with Claymore broadsides...and week-long vigils were established in the...brush...nearby.’

Rangers at War: LRRPs in Vietnam

p60 ‘Two North Vietnamese walked into the ambush zone. Unfortunately, the claymore mines were not “double-primed” and they failed to fire when the detonator was pushed. There was a loud clacking noise and then silence. The rangers froze.’

p140 ‘In the evening the twenty soldiers moved into a new position using three staggered movements. The new ambush position was organized into an eleven-man ambush zone with three security troops to each flank and in the rear.’

p189 ‘Another refinement involved rigging concussion grenades in the center of remotely-triggered ambush zones so that a few stunned enemy soldiers were left alive for capture.’

p212 ‘Rangers were killed checking their own kill zones after ambushes. To reduce this danger, the rangers began taping small bags of persistent-agent CS (gas) powder to the front of their claymore mines.'
The mines spewed both pellets and gas to render targeted soldiers temporarily ineffective and were supplemented by gas grenades.’

p214  ‘The patrol detonated its flank and rear claymore mines.’

p229  ‘Don’t initiate [contact] unless you know what you’re getting into. Look at the lead men. If they were smoking and joking, blow them away. If alert with weapons on the ready, let them pass. They’re probably the point for a bigger unit close behind.’

p236  ‘Instead they ambushed the enemy soldiers, who, as it turned out, were scouts for an entire company of the 33d NVA Regiment...As a consequence of the recently botched ambush, he directed...a thorough critique of the action...The review reemphasized the fact that enemy units habitually employed five to seven men moving fifty or seventy yards in front of their main contingents. Team leaders were cautioned to use patience and sound judgment before initiating a surprise attack. The company rehearsed the correct positioning of ambushes, so that individuals could observe a good length of suspected enemy paths.’

p250  ‘Ranger teams carried bountiful CS-gas grenades and 40mm grenadier cartridges that dispersed enough riot gas to daze and distract the enemy, thus covering a short retreat.’

Tunnel Warfare

p22  ‘We waited until they were very close. We were in our ‘spider hole’ firing positions—the Americans never saw us...I ordered my men to fire, one GI fell down, the others just stood around looking at him.”

A Vietnamese Lieutenant describing the lack of immediate action drill one the part of an American unit.
- Ed.

p36  ‘Next to the point man, the radio operator was an early target in any Viet Cong ambush.’
2: Booby Traps

Force Recon Diary, 1969

p34 ‘The enemy was known to booby-trap their own dead...The way to combat this...trick was to always use a covering team, which would aim at the suspected dead man while the search was being conducted...Then, if available, a rope...would be placed around the body so that it could be dragged off the grenade without killing any of the search team.

The last method used to search the dead was to physically pick up the body and...slam it back down...giving the grenade spoon time to fly and...using the body to absorb the explosion.’

p206 ‘Kegler and I moved...to where the first North Vietnamese soldier had fallen...As Kegler covered me, the memory of the booby-trap class...came back. I placed my hands on his shoulders, picked him up, and then dropped him back to the ground. No booby trap.’

Marine at War

p230 ‘The Japanese...still took the trouble to booby-trap the dead...We approached our dead with caution, circling the corpse, kneeling down to peer under it, and turning it over with a rifle butt. We had lost a man when a corpse blew up in his face.’

NAM

p96 ‘“Don’t go through an open gate...” I was hopping over the fence...Man, he hit that...gate and a shaped charge blew his ass all over the place...’
3: Claymore Mines

L.R.R.P.: The Professional

p164 ‘Actually, the two NVA had crawled past the mine. The backblast had killed them.’

RECONDO: LRRPs in the 101st Airborne

p194 ‘We set claymores around our perimeter. We kept them in close to prevent any wandering NVA from discovering them and propped them against large trees to protect us from the backblast.’

p205 “We got hit by litnin’?” he muttered...
“Litnin’! Yeah, it hit aw antenna...
“...That explains why my handset blew up. It must have jumped from the antenna and blew all our mines at once,” said Rucker. “The backblast almost killed us.”
“Linderer’s concussion grenade must have exploded inside his ruck. That’s why we didn’t find any of his gear...”
4: Cohesion

The End of the Line

p73 ‘Crewcut Marine Corps officers thought of the Special Forces as ill-disciplined rabble...The Special Forces troopers thought of the Marines as stupid innocents who blundered about in too-large units with too-little understanding of just how tough things could get in the mountains near Laos.’

p140 ‘Giap had learned an important truth about the Americans by 1966:...Even with 500,000 troops in South Vietnam, it was a rare day when...one-tenth of them...searched the country-side for Giap’s soldiers. The Americans had stupendously large base areas and only small combat units.

For example, the U.S. Marines had put together a major...force for a 1966 operation...Task Force Delta-a regimental headquarters, an artillery battalion, and four infantry battalions-more than 4,000 men...

One of the infantry battalions was left...to secure the...transshipment point for...ammunition and supplies. A second battalion guarded the artillery base...A third battalion air-assaulted into the enemy valley with only three companies because its fourth company had been left to guard the perimeter...Fifteen Marines were killed and 10...injured in helicopter crashes on the first day, so one of the companies secured a landing zone to evacuate casualties. The other two companies, each down to about 130 men because of malaria, heat exhaustion, combat losses, and vacation leaves, set out to look for the North Vietnamese.

The fourth battalion landed by helicopter a two-day march away. It, too, had left a company...for base security.

Thus Task Force Delta was actually searching for the North Vietnamese with just five companies - hardly 700 men.’

p141 ‘The North Vietnamese general...did not hesitate to match his soldiers against the americans...”We cannot compare our weapons to theirs,” he said, “but if we consider the infantry - the principal force determining victory or defeat...U.S. forces are not superior to ours. They are greenhorns, not to be compared with the French...They have no idea of jungle fighting...They walk into traps that wouldn’t fool a baby.”

One of Giap’s colleagues...derided U.S. forces for running from combat if air and artillery were not immediately available...Giap’s veterans rarely faced experienced American soldiers: the one-year tour and rapid rotation of officers guaranteed rookie Americans in the line in...every battle.’

Fields of Fire

p158 ‘The company commander called him and ordered him to count...He didn’t want to do it. He thought again about bagging it. But if he did it to the Skipper, some of his men would do it to him.

Shirking danger was an infection that spread more quickly that the plague.’

Force Recon Diary, 1969

p69 ‘If...we keep you, you’ll be assigned to one of the four platoons as the platoon corpsman, ...you will be expected to do the same job as any Marine of the same rank in your platoon. The only obvious difference is that you will be the medical expert...You will eat, sleep, train...shower, and shave with your platoon in garrison, and you will...hump your ass off with your team in the bush.’
‘The 5th and 7th special Forces Groups at Fort Bragg...select and train entire teams that would then deploy and serve together in Vietnam. The importance of team integrity was something that the old-timers learned back in the OSS days, when putting together...Teams was referred to as “engagement” and “marriage.”’
Battle Cry

p122  "Fall out!" I ordered..."Hodgkiss...lay out the panels for air identification!..."
      The sharp blast of a whistle pierced the air. "Aircraft!" We scattered from the roadside...
      The squadron leader...spotted the white identification panels laid out on the deck...He...barrel-
      rolled in recognition of friendly troops.'

Guadalcanal: Starvation Island

p287  ‘C Company Marines quickly developed a winning solution to the problem of flushing he
      Japanese from the jungle-choked ravine. First the company 60mm mortars would fire. When the Japanese
      bolted up the far side of the ravine...the company machine gunners and riflemen mowed them down or
      forced the survivors back into the trees. The ploy worked again and again.’
6: Communications

Alamein to Zem Zem

p17  “Nuts one, is everybody O.K.?”
     “Two O.K. off.”
     “Three O.K. off.”
     “Four O.K. off,” said the troop leaders in turn.
     “Five O.K. off,” I completed the group.’

A good example of a short, concise, collective transmission. - Ed.

Chickenhawk

p110  “Yellow Two taking hits!” Decker’s voice shot through me.
      “Muzzle blasts from three o’clock.” A totally useless call. No call sign; therefore, no position.’

p298  “FuckyouGI...!” came over the radio.
      “Hey, Charlie’s got our frequency,” I said...
      Gary called the command ship. “We’re monitoring a Charlie broadcast from the south.”

Clear and Present Danger

p207  ‘He made a brief radio transmission...His answer was a double click of static as the captain keyed
the transmit key on his radio, but without saying anything. Chavez answered in kind...’

p302  “HAWK, this is KNIFE. LZ is the northern edge of RENO. Standing by for extraction, over.”
      “Bravo X-Ray, over.”
      Colonel Johns was interrogating for possible trouble. Juliet Zulu was the coded response
indicating that they were in enemy hands and that a pickup was impossible. Charlie Foxtrot meant that
there was active contact, but that they could still be gotten out. Lima Whiskey was the all-clear signal.’

p339  ‘Chavez radioed back-five taps on the transmit key answered by three-for the squad to remain
in place.’

p357  ‘The radio earpiece made three rasping dashes of static. Ramiriz was in place and asking if Ding
was ready. He keyed his radio two times in reply...’

p398  ‘Chavez tapped four dashes on this radio button, the danger signal. I see it, the captain replied
with two dashes. Then three dashes. Get ready.’

p507  ‘Guerra keyed his transmit switch by way of reply.’

p566  ‘Chavez tapped the danger signal on his radio. Behind him everyone stopped and waited for his
all-clear.’
The End of the Line

p111  ‘The Marine officers...played word games...The radio shackle codes were in enemy hands, captured when the recon team was ambushed...Because they were announcing into an open radio the exact number of men in each outpost, officers tried to conceal the truth with tricks.’

“Experience with Assault Guns”

- ‘In action only transmit battle reports.’

Fields of Fire

p65  ‘A Green Star Cluster burst above them...The listening post was coming in.’

Force Recon Diary, 1969

p96  ‘The system for receiving any radio message traffic at night was designed around silence. “Isthmus...this is Zulu Bravo, radio check. Over. The time on deck is 2315. If you are Alpha Sierra (all secure) at this time, give me one, Over.” The “one” meant that I was to depress the rubber button on the radio handset one time...The PRC-77 was never turned off.’

p99  ‘There are few acts of nature that compare with a great thunderstorm...and a nine-foot whip antenna attached to a radio made for an attractive lightning rod that no one wanted to get close to.’

p158  ‘“The Gurkas of Nepal are considered to be the finest infantrymen in the world.” The Gurkas, we were told, do not lie. Their word was their bond, and that one great characteristic made them invaluable to the British. What they reported as having been observed on their patrols was the absolute truth. If they saw ten Japanese soldiers, they reported ten. If they saw no one, they reported seeing no one. The point was easily made: we were expected to do the same thing.’

p175  ‘The final patrol report that was filed...did not indicate that we had killed sixty-two North Vietnamese soldiers. We knew that number had passed by us on the trail...But like the Gurkas of Nepal...we reported only what we had seen and knew to be true.’

“The Heliborne Company Raid: A Commander’s Challenge”

- ‘During a raid, there is no time for a radio operator to tell another to standby for the “actual.” The actuals must be on the line receiving and transmitting.’

- ‘From here the next step is to train, utilizing the no-communications plan, which is vital and must be rehearsed. For example, an SOP should include a requirement for a 60-second length base of fire before shifting or ceasing. Likewise, one long whistle blast followed by one short always shifts or ceases the base of fire and launches the assault element into the objective area. Two short blasts summon reinforcements form the support element into the objective area, while three short blasts signal consolidation.’
Inside the LRRPs: Rangers in Vietnam

p129 ‘The major weakness of...the...77 was a handset that, if it got wet tended to short out...A simple, effective solution to the moisture problem was to wrap the handset in the plastic bag that packaged replacement radio batteries.’

Rangers at War: LRRPs in Vietnam

p88 ‘Colored smoke from grenades and flares dissipated in the soupy haze of rain and mist or failed to penetrate the...canopies. Recondo teams adopted the Special Forces technique of “breaking squelch” by keying their radio handsets in fifteen-second spurts. The brief transmissions enabled aviators to follow the signals through their helicopter homing devices and locate patrol positions within a few hundred yards. The helicopter crew then narrowed its search and normally spotted signal panels, mirrors, beacons, or smoke...’

p173 ‘Team attempts to transmit by voice on radio failed because all FM frequencies were jammed by loud Vietnamese music and song recordings...Throughout the patrol, whenever the team attempted to transmit using voice mode, the enemy jammed their radio frequencies with blaring Vietnamese music.’

A Rumor of War

p257 ‘I grabbed the handset and gave our map coordinates, hoping the voice on the other end was not one of the VC, who sometimes monitored our radio traffic.’

Sword Point

p207 ‘The signal to initiate the ambush would be a green star cluster...Cerro...passed the word to stand by. On the lip of his foxhole sat three star clusters, two green and one red, open and ready for use. The column to their front was theirs...With no time to waste, Cerro reached for a green star cluster. He had to start the ambush before the soviet...had...recovered from their surprise...In the darkness, Cerro removed that star cluster’s cover, sliding it over the bottom of the tube...he struck the bottom of it with the palm...setting off the star cluster...He had no sooner done so than the entire area around him was bathed in a bright-red light from the star cluster he had fired. Cerro froze. He couldn’t believe it...In his haste, he had given the signal to withdraw...he could see his TOW crew leaving their positions in accordance with the plan...Cerro pounded his fist against the dirt’

p293 ‘Kurpov...could see a red glow in the sky...marking the spot where an armored vehicle had died. But whose?...The crack of the radio...provided the answers he sought. Tanks!...Two more flashes lit up the west...The battalion commander...called Kurpov for a report. Kurpov’s platoon was not actually in contact. What he told the battalion commander was exactly what he had seen.’

p294 ‘Slowly the reports came in. He listened impassively as his commanders gave their inflated reports of kills. Each report fueled the battalion commander’s anger. When all units had reported in, he yelled into his handset, demanding that they give him accurate reports, challenging anyone to bring him...a dead marine...They...knew what he meant.’

p366 ‘...I have negative contact with Tango Six-zero or Echo Six-zero. I think they’ve been overrun. Over.’
Be careful of passing uncertain reports. Don’t guess. Pass only what you know to be true. - Ed.

p382 “Mike Four-four, this is Tango Three-two. Update on that last...report. Eighteen T-80 tanks - I say again, T-80 tanks - moving south. Lead element now at five two zero, seven seven zero...”

Position is given for lead element of column - Ed.

“Tank Hunter Companies Equipped with Assault Guns”

- ‘Soon after the first thirty minutes of combat the Russians came on our radio net and, using the codename of the company commander, attempted to get position reports...and to give orders. The company commander was forced to change the frequency three times during the attack... Comments of the Inspector General... The changing of radio frequencies during combat must be practiced in training.’

They Jumped at Midnight

p237 ‘His first order of business was to request medical supplies...and small arms ammunition for his rifle companies. He had no way of knowing at the time that his call would be intercepted by monitors at Fifth Army headquarters near the shoreline or that he would be reprimanded after the battle action for “breach of security” for ordering desperately needed medical supplies and ammo over the radio, his only means of communication.’

The Third World War

p14 “Thirty T-72s and...twice that number of BMP now west of the obstacle, sounds of a large force following them-over.”

Note the honesty. The report refers to sounds, but does not guess. - Ed.

Tunnel Warfare

p72 ‘He developed a “click-talk” by which he switched his set on, once, twice, or however many times in accordance with a prearranged code by which very basic information was transmitted to the ground...he abhorred speech and allowed no two-way communication.’

The World’s Elite Forces

p16 ‘The...message informing him that “Sunray”...was “down”...was received by Major Chris Keeble, the second in command.’

“Sunray” was the brevity code for the commanding officer. – Ed.
7: Field Skills

Field Skills are those disciplines that make a good soldier. This chapter is divided into eight sections:

- Cold
- Camouflage Discipline
- Hygiene
- Light Discipline
- Noise Discipline
- Smell
- Trash Discipline
- Water

Cold

The Battle of Hurtgen Forest

p198 ‘They were learning other things, too. Not to eat snow...alcohol was...shunned...They were learning...to change their socks as often as possible to prevent trench foot; to keep...morphine syringes...underneath their armpits to keep them from freezing;...they wore two shirts, changing them at regular intervals so that the one that was damp with sweat was transferred to the outer layer...They learned to stuff their uniforms with copies of the *Stars and Stripes* as the hoboes had done...and how to heat a can in a porridgelike mix of earth and gasoline.’

The Other Battle of the Bulge: Operation Northwind

p57 ‘But the greenhorns of the 70th Division were learning fast and were now keeping a spare pair of socks “in our bosom” so they had dry warm socks to change into, pressing the wet pair taken off close to their body to dry out...They learned how to urinate on their frozen weapons to de-freeze the mechanism. They learned how to interchange their sweat-soaked shirts, wearing them two at a time for extra warmth, the wet one closest to the body being replaced by the dry outer one.’

Camouflage Discipline

Clear and Present Danger

p305 ‘Already sitting on his desk was a...Kevlar helmet...For the 7th LID, the camouflage cloth cover was further decorated with knotted shreds of the same material used for their battle-dress uniform fatigues...it broke up the regular outline of the helmet, making it harder to spot.’
Vega set up his Squad Automatic Weapon next to a rocky outcropping. A camouflage cloth was set across the muzzle. He could have torn up a shrub to hide the gun behind, but they didn’t want to disturb anything.

‘Through his binoculars he could see the vague glow...With the sun behind him he didn’t have to worry about a reflection off the glasses.’

He knew that they were the nearest thing to invisible, well concealed in ground cover and...trees...They had to keep still, since the human eye is very effective at detecting movement.’

Cooks and Bakers

The gunnery sergeant was...kneeling on one knee at the far edge of the clearing, watching...Branches and leaves stuck out of his helmet.

When...on patrol, he always camouflaged his helmet with branches and leaves, and whenever the column stopped, the gunny would get down on one knee and remain silent, watchful, until the column started moving again. It had seemed to the lieutenant that the gunny was someone from whom he could learn a lot.’

The End of the Line

The North Vietnamese Army...resisted “with great fury,” and the Marines found the going very tough: “The NVA are excellent troops whose marksmanship, fire and camouflage discipline, and aggressiveness are outstanding.”

Camouflage had special meaning...Hardly anyone in North Vietnam traveled without first donning a broad hat decorated with leaves and twigs; every moving vehicle was covered with a rope fretwork into which boughs and branches had been woven. Camouflage could be a companion more worthy that a flak jacket; the armored vest might stop bullets or shell fragments, but camouflage could keep the bullets from coming at all.

The constant freshening of camouflage was only one of dozens of differences between the...soldiers of Giap’s...Army, and their American peers.’

Fighting on Guadalcanal

Ten men in my platoon were killed because they walked up on a Jap 37mm gun. I went up later...The Japanese gun was so well camouflaged that I got within four feet of the gun before I saw it.’

The Japanese sew grass and leaves to their shirts and hats.’

The biggest thing I have learned since I hit Guadalcanal is that the japanese camouflage is miles ahead of ours. Their individual can camouflage himself a lot better than ours.’
**Force Recon Diary, 1969**

p97  ‘The application of cammie was a ritual...Dark green paint went to the bony surfaces, and the light green shade broke up the contours of the face...The last rule about camouflage was that we didn’t shave in the bush. Shaving was considered a waste of valuable water, and a thick beard helped to hold the cammie in place.’

p127  ‘Bishop lay his M-16...down on a foot locker...Bishop had found a roll of green duct tape, and...used strips of the tape to cover the black plastic stock and forestock of his rifle. With the aid of a...scalpel, he...cut away leaf-shaped areas of the green tape, producing a...camouflaged pattern on his rifle.

“This...is a good example of free thinking. It is simple, it is effective, it gives us an advantage, and we have enough green tape to camouflage every weapon in the platoon. If you’ll pass Bishop’s rifle around, you’ll see some improvements that have been made to it. There is a strip of white tape applied to the front sight post. The tape will help you get a faster sight picture in reduced light. There are three sections of cleaning rod taped to the right side of the forestock. The reason that there are three sections is to give you the right length of cleaning rod to extract a jammed cartridge casing...Please notice...that there is no sling on this rifle. Slings and sling swivels make noise. Tape the sling swivels down against the stock.”

**Inside the LRRPs: Rangers in Vietnam**

p77  ‘Captured documents...revealed that the enemy’s common name for LRRPs was “the men with painted faces.” This was in reference to the...camouflage greasepaint that the LRRPs applied...while in the field.*

*Regular infantry units also used camouflage paint but with little regularity. Some credit this lack of camouflage use to poor discipline on the part of the line troops, but this is not an accurate criticism. Regular infantry soldiers spent weeks and often months in the jungles...Lack of cleanliness, and the resulting skin infections and diseases, were a major problem...Line infantry grunts had enough hygiene problems without compounding them with greasepaint.’

p152  ‘Camouflage was applied to equipment and to the recon men themselves. Thin strips of olive-drab burlap were wrapped around weapon stocks and rucksacks. Any shiny pieces of metal were spot-painted or covered with still more tape. Natural foliage was added to the camouflage once the team arrived in the recon zone.’

**Rangers at War: LRRPs in Vietnam**

p49  ‘The North Vietnamese Army...style of warfare...differed substantially...About the only thing that remained the same was the enemy preference for nighttime movement, daylight use of camouflage capes or nets with fresh foliage, and confinement to trails having good overhead concealment.’

**RECONDO: LRRPs in the 101st Airborne**

p80  ‘The enemy team leader motioned to his men to fan out...Four of the soldiers pulled out what appeared to be pieces of an American camouflage cargo parachute, shook off the dust, then placed the material over their heads, and in an instant they became invisible. I lost them.’
‘All of them wore dark green uniforms and floppy hats, with what looked like shredded camouflage material sewn on top. Many of them appeared to be wearing branches and leaves tied to their backs as camouflage. It was the sort of camouflage a man would wear to hide from aerial observation, not from observers on the ground.’

**Sword Point**

‘Major Dixon returned to the command post...As he approached, the glint of the late-afternoon sun reflecting off uncovered glass caught his eye...he was disturbed to see...vehicles...without camouflage nets up or cloth covering their windows or mirrors...From the air the CP must look like a used-military-vehicle parking lot.’

**Hygiene**

**Cooks and Bakers**

‘The lieutenant went down to...the LZ...It was hot now and the stench in the LZ was worse...some of the men had taken craps and not buried them; there were flies everywhere.’

**Fields of Fire**

‘In front of him, two short strides away, a man shivered in the wet grass...The perimeter had not been difficult to locate. There was the trail, then the mattings of sawgrass: recent...paths that led to the perimeter. And even though the rain washed the air continuously, there had been the odor from the cat holes: a hundred odorous droppings, ringing the perimeter like a stench-filled moat.’

_This example is of an NVA sapper probing the Marine’s lines. - Ed._

**Fighting on Guadalcanal**

‘The Regimental Commander must make it his personal duty to watch and be greatly interested in sanitation. Because of our great interest in sanitation, our sick list is lower than normal.’

‘Sanitation...To violate it causes billions of flies and sickness. Some lousy undisciplined recruits defecated in fox holes, which caused trouble in the dark. We learned that individual cans should be buried...When you occupy a position for several days in the tropics, the sanitation problem becomes tremendous.’
Force Recon Diary, 1969

p204  "During the night I left the harbor site to make a head call. I think that I went close to the trail, but I didn’t know that it was there. I didn’t cover it up real well, and I left a lot of shit paper laying around on the ground."

I wasn’t pleased...considering that his dumb move could have...been spotted by one of the North Vietnamese soldiers...I had only moved about thirty feet away...when I spotted white paper laying on the green jungle floor. Here was his little mistake...!

RECONDO: LRRPs in the 101st Airborne

p152  ‘Without cigarettes or insect repellent, getting rid of leeches seemed impossible. Then Roberts passed back a taped-up shaker of salt. It killed the leeches quicker than insect repellent.’

p154  ‘All nature calls were done Special Forces style. You had to relieve yourself by kneeling down to piss, and you had to piss directly on a leaf or a bush so that it made no sound. If you stood up and just pissed on the leaves like guys in line units did, any NVA or VC within a hundred feet could hear you. We also had to stay in close to take a shit and bury it with the paper.’

p159  ‘We sterilized our NDP, burying any debris and trash left in our NDP. We made sure that there were no signs of having been there.’

Light Discipline

Alamein to Zem Zem

p54  ‘Among all these beacons, we thought our small brew fire might be allowed to break the rule against fires after dark. The enemy were at least four miles off, anyway, and no one fires at a solitary camp fire.’

His CO put out the fire immediately. Protection from observation was the primary concern. - Ed.

Company Commander

p119  ‘We lit cigarettes underneath shelter-halves and cupped them carefully in the palms of our hands lest the light show to some enemy patrol.’

The End of the Line

p76  ‘The Special Forces soldiers...survived behind enemy lines because they traveled...in small columns that could move quickly. Operating beyond the edge of the American artillery umbrella, they relied on stealth. Now, they had to hide themselves as carefully from Marines as they did from North Vietnamese because Marines tended to call airstrikes on anything that moved and wasn’t wearing Marine green...Marine aircraft...circled...their patrols, broadcasting map coordinates in the clear to the combat
base to determine if they were “friendlies.” Didn’t the Marines know...that the North Vietnamese also had radios?

The combat base showed so many lights at night that the Special Forces troopers at Lang Vei called it Coney Island.’

The World’s Elite Forces

p55 ‘The Argentine 12th Infantry Regiment...was a conscript regiment, full of raw troops who did not know enough to avoid presenting silhouettes against the rocks of the mountain slopes, and who were sufficiently ignorant to allow their cooking fires, torches and cigarettes to burn unshielded at night.’

Noise Discipline

Company Commander

p114 ‘I signaled for the company...and we plunged into the woods...our packs and equipment rattling loosely as we ran.’

p237 ‘The column moved out, men walking without conversation...their heavy boots and rattling equipment belying their efforts at secrecy.’

p237 ‘The men plowed noisily through the...underbrush. I cautioned those around me to be quiet, but there was no stopping the...curses as branches slapped men in the face or...thorns tore at...hands and faces.’

p295 ‘We were moving too rapidly...The clump-clump of...heavy boots sounded on the hard roadbed, and weapons and equipment rattled noisily.’

p305 ‘I directed both...Platoons forward...The men sounded like cattle thrashing through the underbrush in the darkness.’

The End of the Line

p13 ‘It was not a quiet march....Stealth and tactical finesse, traditional assets of the infantry, were often sacrificed to reconnaissance by fire in Vietnam in the hope that the falling shells might trigger an enemy ambush prematurely. Some officers compared the practice to whistling past a graveyard, but a heavy majority employed it whenever possible. Pocket radios blaring Beatles’ songs, frequent visits by helicopters with mail or hot food or curious battalion commanders, the loud whacking of machetes, and the constant How’s-it-going?-Seen-anything-yet? radio chit-chat of units in the field had pretty much eliminated stealth as an American tactic, anyway.’
Fields of Fire

p91  ‘The column seemed to jet along through the knee-deep rice...Too fast, he mused loudly...We’ll walk right into them and when we get five feet away they’ll kill us all...Can’t hear anything but clonks of LAAWs and bandoleers and rice swish...

  Goodrich...fell down...the echoes of his bandoleers a scream inside...his helmet...
  He softly clicked his weapon off “safe,” then thought of tripping over Ottenburger again and accidentally killing him, and clicked it back...
  Goodrich’s ears were filled with clonking metal, whispered curses, and his own stomps form stumbles into potholes’

p264  ‘Waterbull...wore the third poncho...The poncho hood was over his ears, underneath his helmet. He did not hear the night. He heard himself when his body rustled. He heard the rain’s explosions when he stood still.’

Fighting on Guadalcanal

p9  “We are learning the hard way to move quietly in this jungle.”

p18  “The ‘smoking lamp’ goes out at dark and you have got to be quiet.”

p24  “I practice walking quietly over rocks, twigs, grass, leaves, through vines, etc. I practice this around this bivouac area...When I am scouting and come to an opening in the jungle....I...run across quickly and quietly. Going slow here may cost a scout his life.”

Force Recon Diary, 1969

p70  ‘As Sergeant Schemmel handed the new tags to me he said, “Wrap some electric tape around these, Doc, so that they don’t make any noise. No one in the bush wants to ever give their position away.”’

p99  ‘The temptation to wear the hooded poncho was great, but Sergeant Chapman knew that wearing it would reduce our field of vision and cover our ears, the two senses that our survivability was based upon.’

Inside the LRRPs: Rangers in Vietnam

p6  “I then carefully assembled the gear and taped all parts that might reflect light, or rattle, with flat, black tape...

  When I was satisfied that everything was in order, I emptied my pockets of all mission nonessential items, put on all the gear, and with weapon in hand jumped up and down to be sure I didn’t make any noise. After adding a little more tape to items that rubbed together, I took a camouflage stick and covered all exposed skin with the black and green greasepaint.”

p152  ‘Any loose items of equipment were taped, and pieces of equipment that might rub together and make noise were padded. This process...was validated on completion by the LRRP, in full equipment, jumping up and down to check for rattles or noise.’
L.R.R.P.: The Professional

p9  ‘We modified our weapons and equipment to eliminate potential noises; taping web-gear...tying loose clothing...to keep the cloth from rustling or pocket items from thumping together...Weapon slings...were removed and sling swivels taped down.’

Marine at War

p239  ‘We all crouched down...The man beside me was shaking so much that his gear rattled.’

The Monk and the Marines

p107  ‘You find yourself moving down one side of a street being careful where you put your feet...all is quiet except for the clink of gear as the men move.’

NAM

p111  ‘Marines are the noisiest motherfuckers at night. People tripping and cursing. We were...scared...We were yelling out for one another. “Hey, Joe, where are you?” “Hey, over here, man, over here.” Thank God, the Vietnamese out there that night didn’t speak English. They figured we were just crazy, running around in the dark...hollering.’

p156  ‘We were...extremely professional...the only troops...who had total light and noise discipline. All the moving parts on the rifles were taped down. Trigger guards were removed for ease in firing. No noise at all. You’d never know we were moving.’

p210  ‘My dog tags were stuck in my boots. You unlace your boot and put one dog tag on each foot so they don’t make...sound at night when you’re moving.’

“One Place, Three Wars: Part 1”

  •  “Rain hitting our ponchos created another kind of noise, a metallic sound the enemy could hear.”

RECONDO: LRRPs in the 101st Airborne

p3  ‘Even the basic things were drummed in—never remove your equipment, even while sleeping. Our rifles were taped to prevent the slightest rattle. Extra tape was carried on the stock to cover the mouths of any Vietcong prisoners we might capture...No insect repellent was carried on missions because of its scent.’

p38  ‘Ten minutes later, Byron woke me. “You’re snoring!” he whispered. He told me to sleep on my stomach.’

p79  ‘By cupping my hands behind each ear and aiming them towards the enemy position, the sounds coming from the jungle below were amplified.’
p90 ‘Our chopper banked into a steep descent...we all jumped out and sprinted for the wood line...No one moved, no one spoke. We listened for any telltale sounds that the enemy was around: the rustle of a branch, the snap of a twig, the snap of an AK-47 safety switching to fire...After twenty minutes of total silence, we felt out insertion was secure.’

p172 ‘It looked more like a Boy Scout Jamboree than an army encampment. Wet uniforms were drying in the trees. Rice was bubbling over cooking fires; this was the first time I had ever camped with a company-sized unit...I could see how people got that false sense of security...they may have had a hundred...guys stomping around close by... Getting started that morning was a...freak show. The noise was unbelievable.’

p193 ‘I could hear the jungle birds calling up ahead...they would...warn you when company was coming. Their calls were normal, unexcited. The enemy column had continued on up the crest of the ridge.’

p196 ‘I didn’t like moving. It was risky in a heavy downpour. It took away sight and sound and pushed the odds in the enemy’s favor.’

A Rumor of War

p79 ‘With the aircraft gone...the only sounds were the gurgling of the river...Walking around the perimeter...I crashed through a thicket of elephant grass and heard a taut voice cry out, “Who’s there? Who’s that?”’

p79 “Roger, Charley six, I read back...Roger, Six, This is Two out.”...
“Sir, the Six say...”
“I heard what the Six said, Widener. Every VC inside of ten miles must have heard it. Keep your fucking voice down, will you.”

p108 ‘Helmets bouncing against our heads, canteens against our hips, rifle slings and bandoliers juggling, we sounded like a platoon of junkmen.’

Sword Point

p1 ‘Only upon closer inspection of the tree line south of the track could the steel-blue barrels of several rifles and machine guns be seen...Duncan watched the track from his position...Duncan’s mind...was brought back to the problem at hand by a report from the platoon’s forward security element, located one hundred meters down the trail. Using a sound-powered phone, they reported movement to their front...The first sign that told them the OPFOR was near was the crunching of sand beneath boots and the sound of someone scurrying about in the grass and the bushes...From the machine-gun position to his left, the sudden beep-beep-beep of a digital watch announced that it was 1700 hours. Duncan, his eyes as wide as saucers, turned to the source of the noise...Further reports from the security element were cut short by the popping of small-arms fire.
Without hesitation, Duncan turned to his lieutenant and shouted, “We’ve blown the ambush!” then yelled to the squad leaders, “Break contact and move to the rally point, now!”’
They Jumped at Midnight

p41 ‘The airborne men, as noiselessly as possible...took up firing positions along the dark beach. Despite efforts to the contrary, there was much rattling of weapons and rustling of equipment. “For Chrissake, quit making all that goddamned racket,” a voice called out in the darkness in a stage whisper.’

p49 ‘The...scout craft was so near...that the Americans could...hear the occasional shout of a Wehrmacht officer calling to his grenadiers. Despite strict orders...Germans dug in along the water line nervously lighted cigarettes, and the quick flickers of illumination were seen by Ensign Anderson...

Anderson and his men, to avoid detection from the shore, were wearing special rubber-soled shoes and all personal equipment which might rattle was securely taped to their outer clothing. Special pains were taken to see that all lights were extinguished below deck.’

Smell

Clear and Present Danger

p244 ‘They had all washed once in the stream...but no one had used soap for fear that suds or smell...might alert someone downstream.’

Cooks and Bakers

p18 ‘The lieutenant had rolled down his sleeves...The smell of mosquito repellent was strong around him.’

Force Recon Diary, 1969

p169 ‘He told me to take a few deep breaths...and then tell him what I smelled. The strong smell of boiled cabbage was in the air...If we could smell the cooking fires of the NVA, they couldn’t be too far away.’

Guadalcanal Remembered

p269 ‘The 2nd Raiders...began making their way down the...mountain...” We smelled Japs all the way down,” said a Raider.’

Guadalcanal: Starvation Island

p292 ‘It was...pitch dark...As the Japanese drew back...Raiders quietly crawled from their foxholes and sniffed the air to find the telltale odor of their adversaries. (Many Raiders said the Japanese smelled like cooked rice.)’
Inside the LRRPs: Rangers in Vietnam

p120  ‘Heat tabs were slow to heat and gave out a noxious odor that would...alert any enemy with a sense of smell of the LRRPs’ location.’

p122  ‘Polymagna, an antidiarrheal, was useful for its intended purpose, but was also taken to stop regular bowel movements...American fecal matter smelled differently from that of the enemies’ and was a calling card announcing GIs had been in the area.’

p151  ‘During the twenty-four hours prior to insertion, the LRRPs refrained from using soap, after-shave lotion, or any other substance that had an odor. Part of this procedure was valid in that the enemy’s sense of smell was extremely acute after long periods in the boonies.’

The Monk and the Marines

p131  ‘You could smell the gooks. There were hammocks spread, and a couple of fires going, and cooked rice.’

NAM

p130  ‘One man told me that after he moved...into Lurps he “developed the ability to smell gooks, just sense where they were.”’

Rangers at War: LRRPs in Vietnam

p116  ‘The scout noted how the trench smelled of sap from newly cut brushes and fresh dirt.’

RECONDO: LRRPs in the 101st Airborne

p147  ‘Prior to Recondo School, some of the teams...had allowed guys to smoke cigarettes on missions, as long as they kept it concealed. Wearing insect repellent was taken for granted...Some of my non-Recondo-trained team leaders even cooked in the field

Not this mission! Smoking was not even up for discussion. The gooks didn’t wear insect repellent, and neither did we. The enemy could smell it on you and locate your position. Cooking was out of the question. Rations were eaten cold.’

p155  ‘After six days in the jungle, the combination of stale sweat and plain old body odor made us all stink. But the smell could actually be an advantage. Your diet gave you a distinct aroma. The gooks smelled like rotten fish. We had been eating Vietnamese indigenous rations for the past two weeks, just to pick up their smell. If any trail watchers got downwind from our team, they would just think we were another VC unit.’

p193  ‘The storm moved out...At least it dissipated our scent and deadened any sound. The price of safety was getting soaked and staying wet all night.’

p250  ‘Cigarette smoke can be detected up to one-quarter mile if wind conditions are right. You can also smell fish, garlic, and other foods being cooked for several hundred meters. You may even be able to
detect a person who has been eating garlic, or other specific food, from a considerable distance, thus discovering a guerrilla ambush...

For the man who seldom or never uses soap, aftershave lotion, or other such toiletry articles, it is easy for him to detect a person using these items for a considerable distance...

Insect repellent is another item that you can smell from a distance.’

**Trash Discipline**

**Clear and Present Danger**

p222 ‘Garbage was assembled and buried. Olivero sprinkled CS tear-gas powder before the dirt was smoothed over the hole. That would keep animals from scratching it up for a few weeks...By the time Chavez moved out at point, there was no evidence that they’d ever been here.’

**Inside the LRRPs: Rangers in Vietnam**

p138 ‘It was common VC and NVA practice to sweep LZs after an extraction in search of discarded or lost equipment or rations.’

**Rangers at War: LRRPs in Vietnam**

p98 ‘Captain Connevile uncovered the team’s night location and found evidence that the team had never moved as ordered. He also found claymore mines, ration wrappers, cigarette butts, and empty cigarette cartons strewn carelessly over the ground. The 4th Infantry division convened an official inquiry into the incident.’

p138 ‘The patrol moved to a new location and established another overnight surveillance position. There was American communications wire strewn around the area, but the patrollers disregarded the abandoned lines...The patrol ultimately paid a high price for ignoring obvious danger signs-such as wires, which habitually attracted enemy attention-in choosing its nocturnal hide-out.’

p208 ‘On the following afternoon the team discovered a well-used trail along a wooded knoll, littered with cigarettes, small plastic bags, and a beer bottle.’

**Water**

**Clear and Present Danger**

p196 ‘Water was the main hygienic concern, but they’d already been fully briefed about using their water-purification tablets. Whoever forgot had a supply of antidiarrhea pills...all carried an odorless insect repellent.’

p221 ‘“How’s your water?” the medic asked.
“Both a quart low,” Vega replied.’
“Both of you, drink a quart down right now.”...Somebody gets heatstroke and it’s my ass...Oso surprised his friend with a couple more envelopes of Gatorade concentrate...

**Marine at War**

**p65**  ‘We built a quick fire, using...“Composition C,” and put coffee...on to boil.’
8: Fighting Positions

AIR CAV

p100  ‘Colonel Sweet’s intelligence officer...analyzed past...attacks...The attacks that succeeded did so
because the friendly troops stayed under cover during the NVA preparatory rocket and mortar fires.
While the GIs sensibly kept their heads down, sappers cut...paths through barbed wire and...obstacles and
were free to roam the base when the barrage shifted.

The solution was simple to say, but hard to do: when the rockets and mortars started...keep your
heads up, watch the perimeter, and keep firing. The troopers of 2/12 Cav did just that. Hundreds
of...mortar rounds and...rockets slammed into LZ Ross. The troopers kept their heads up and blasted the
NVA attack...During a night of unrelenting barrages and continuous attacks the men of...2/12 Cav killed
242 NVA attackers, compared with the loss of one Cav trooper.’

Alamein to Zem Zem

p21  ‘There were...two german infantry positions and pits for vehicles...beautifully finished and deep-
cut trenches.’

Company Commander

p114  ‘It was only a moment before the big shells began to explode...Some men dropped instinctively to
the...ground. Someone said to stand up beside a tree - there would be more protection against the tree
bursts standing than in a prone position.’

p280  ‘I saw two foxholes...They were deep enough for us to stand in without being exposed from
above, but there was no loose dirt around to reveal the location. It had been cunningly carted away.’

The End of the Line

p143  ‘Walking into an empty enemy field fortification was a revelation for Americans: the straight-
sided, well-drained fighting trenches zigged and zagged for blast protection, the bunkers were airy and
dry, the...cooking stoves...shielded to avoid infrared detection...and not...a single shovelful of red earth
showing to give away the position. North Vietnamese fighting positions were sometimes invisible until
you stood in them; U.S. positions could be seen from space satellites.’

Fields of Fire

p87  ‘Hodges strode the hill, examining it. At its very crest was a long, Z-shaped trench, chest-deep
and as wide as a man’s body. It was perfectly sculpted, the walls of the trench absolutely parallel. In the
middle of the trench, just to one side of it, was a large, circular hole, four feet deep and about six feet
across, with the earth left in the middle of it as a perfectly cylindrical post. It seemed to him to be a work
of engineering genius...

Hodges point to the circular post. “What about that?”

“That’s a machine-gun post...You put a tripod on the post and get down in that hole and you can
fire three-sixty degrees...hardly even expose yourself.”

8-1
“That’s...amazing.”
“Hey, Lieutenant...Old Luke the Gook don’t screw around.””

Fighting on Guadalcanal

p40 “We learned to dig small covered fox holes. Slit trenches are best.”

NAM

p86 ‘We had to dig in. The hole had to be big enough for three or four people in width and what we call titty deep...Each man carried twenty-five empty sandbags. You fill them with the dirt from the hole.’
9: First Aid

Fields of Fire

p56  "Marston was hit in the lung...Snake...stopped crawling and listened expertly to Marston’s gurgles. “Roll onto the side that hurts.”

...The hole gurgled...Snake put the inside of the plastic battle-dressing over the hole, and pulled the dressing supertight over that...”Now. Lay on it till Doc gets here.”"

p58  "Vitelli was unconscious...Doc wiped his forehead...“Nothing I can do...Can’t shoot him up with morphine, not when he’s already out. Might kill him.”"

p60  "...Well, we got medevacs in the air. For emergencies, anyway, Priorities gotta wait till first light.”

p159  ‘Doc Rabbit crawled...over...strapped with double bandoleers that held battle dressing instead of ammunition.’

p205  ‘I have dressed all types of wounds, watering protruding intestines with my canteen to keep them from cracking under sunbake, patched sucking chests with plastic, tied off stumps with field-expedient tourniquets. I can call in medevac helicopters...dare them into any zone.’

Fighting on Guadalcanal

p2  ‘Teach your soldiers...that when a man is hit in the assault to leave him there. Too many of our men suddenly became first-aid men.’

p12  ‘Men get killed rushing to help a wounded man. If the wounded man would crawl about ten yards to his flank, he can generally be aided in safety...We have taught our men that the best way to aid a wounded man is to push ahead so that the wounded man can be cared for by the corpsmen.’

Force Recon Diary, 1969

p94  ‘He said he had prickly heat. I carried two bottles of calamine lotion and one 35mm film canister full of Benadryl capsules.’

p193  ‘Our feet were the biggest problem because we had always taped our utility trousers into our boots to keep the leeches and night-crawling insects from getting on our legs. Wearing two pairs of green socks served to cushion our feet, but once they became wet, the socks acted like wet sponges and caused...immersion foot.’

Marine at War

p24  ‘A man...was sitting on the sand watching the blood throb out of a mangled leg...I got behind the man, reached around his waist and took his belt. I cinched his belt into his leg, just above the knee...after the bleeding had stopped, he rolled over...I stayed with him, yelling, until I could get a medical corpsman.’
“Medical Operations In a Mechanized Infantry Battalion”

- ‘Evacuation vehicles were required to fly red flags if they carried litter-urgent casualties.’
- ‘The medical supply sergeant positioned...preconfigured push packages along the route the evacuation vehicles used to...exit the BAS. As casualties were unloaded, the medical supply sergeant loaded push packages onto the trucks to be taken back to the company aid posts.’
- ‘Battalion SOP requirement that all litter-urgent casualties be evacuated before litter and walking wounded casualties.’
- ‘Medical assets should be positioned as far forward as the tactical scenario permits. A battalion should include a medical support annex to its operations order to ensure that the commanders know the exact locations of all their medical assets.’
- ‘The medical platoon leader must ensure that he receives copies of all overlays, because the medical teams moving around the battlefield must be made aware of...obstacles, minefields...avenues of enemy approach, and company battle positions.’
- ‘The signal officer can designate one of the battalion’s alternate frequencies as the medical platoon internal frequency. With this internal net, the medical platoon can conduct radio rehearsals before each mission without tying up the administrative-logistical net.’
- ‘Each soldier carries two field dressings in his First Aid pouch to enable the medics and combat lifesavers to bandage both an entrance and an exit wound.’

RECONDO: LRRPs in the 101st Airborne

p184 ‘One-clear the airway, stabilize the head and back and elevate shoulders. If unconscious turn on stomach... Two - stop the bleeding. Direct pressure on would. Pressure points...Constricting band is to be tightened only to slow down bleeding when all else fails...Protect and dress the would; if fractured bone, splint above and below the break...Prevent or treat for shock...If shock has started, do not give morphine...Do not inject near would...Replace fluids...Use blood expander...For sucking chest wound, lay person on wounded side, no morphine, no elevation, check for exit wound...Abdominal wounds, do not put organs back inside...’

A Rumor of War

p98 ‘Parties of marines are staggering along, carrying heat casualties who lie in stretchers we have made by cutting poles with machetes and then doubling ponchos over the poles... The doctor replies that...the blood in Powell’s head is bubbling like water...We’ve lost a man, not to the enemy, but to the sun.’
10: Friendly Fire

Chickenhawk

p427 ‘A...gunship company was...to support a ground commander who had radioed that he wanted the Cav to pulverize a spot where he would throw smoke. Yellow smoke.
   Near where the 101st wanted...to strike, a radio operator walked along with his patrol He carried several smoke grenades on his belt. One of them, of course, was yellow.
   At the moment the grunt commander...announced that he had thrown yellow smoke, a branch pulled the yellow-smoke grenade from the radio operator’s belt, popping the pin...The gunships rogered that they saw the smoke, and attacked...
   When the commander noticed that his yellow smoke was not being hit...he screamed at the gunships to stop...
   In just a few seconds they had already killed the radio operator’s platoon leader and wounded twenty-one others, including the radio operator himself.’

Marine at War

p88 ‘He had moved out of his hole and the other man had been trigger-happy and he had poured a clip into John, without challenging him...John...had survived four campaigns...had been killed by one scared man...
   ...it was caused by the cowardice of the man who fired without challenging John. But it also came from the fact John was a “loner,” without any real close buddy.’

p186 ‘As we reached the...ridge, a machine gun opened up on us. It was an American gun and it was fired directly at us.’

NAM

p207 ‘We’re taking rounds. So we’re firing it up...I’m trying to get artillery...and they say, “It’s no good...That’s friendlies.”
   Then I yell out, “Yoh, you speak American?”...My finest fire fight is with another Marine unit.’

p215 ‘The lieutenant and that...squad...went on patrol...Our mortars sitting up on top of the hill said they saw movement in the valley but didn’t check with a...soul to find out if we had a patrol out or not. They opened up on them.
   They...killed the lieutenant and a couple of other guys.’
11: Gear

AIR CAV

p127  ‘It was...command policy to give the men in the field as many...comforts as possible. Aerial supply of food, including ice-cream, was a regular occurrence. Even men on long-range patrol could expect to rendezvous with a helicopter once every five days.’

*Kill them with kindness by letting the helicopters give their positions away.* - Ed.

The Anatomy of a Small War

p142  ‘In 1938, the...Japanese infantryman ordinarily carried 65 pounds...In action against the Russians, however, the helmeted soldier carried but 60 rounds of ammunition, a haversack containing two grenades, canteen, and gas mask. He wrapped all of his equipment to reduce noise, and sometimes, instead of boots, he wore...rubber-soled ground socks to muffle footfalls.’

Chickenhawk

p66   ‘I gave myself the now automatic check down the front of my uniform. My belt buckle was covered with green tape.’

p392  ‘“Hey, a new guy,” said Monk. “But” - he squinted in the glare of the light behind me - “I’d say you’re not new to Nam.” He was looking at my belt buckle. The green tape that covered it was filthy and almost black, the mark of the veteran.’

Clear and Present Danger

p205  ‘The sergeant navigated by the compass strapped to his wrist.’

p299  ‘After that, they all settled down to wait for the helicopter...the main object of concern now was to have every man inventory his gear to make sure that nothing was left behind.’

p635  ‘He wore a green flight suit...There was also a flak jacket. Zimmer had explained to him that it would stop a pistol round, probably, secondary fragments almost certainly, but that he couldn’t depend on it to stop a rifle bullet.’

Cooks and Bakers

p132  ‘The first sergeant leaned forward... “I was in Korea...We didn’t have hardly any gear at all, but what we had we took care of. These men here lose something, they just ask for another. That’s not right.”...

“I’ll tell you another thing we never did in Korea, Lieutenant.”...

“We didn’t steal from our dead.”
The End of the Line

p10  ‘Tom Brindley, a...second lieutenant from St. Paul, ordered his men to shed their bulky flak jackets and packs and then led them, on the run, carrying only rifles and grenades, to the rescue.’

Fighting on Guadalcanal

p40  “It must be impressed...into...soldiers not to throw away their equipment...We actually found some of our new equipment, which had been thrown away, in the hands of the enemy.”

Force Recon Diary, 1969

p78  ‘The idea is to carry only the gear that you really need, know where it is and how to get to it in the dark without making any noise.’

p79  ‘Eight men (including the corpsman) were assigned to a recon team and it was necessary to carry enough emergency medical supplies to support their needs for seven days in the bush...other company corpsmen contributed their advice. “...Take Benadryl capsules...your people will come down with rashes from the heat. Don’t forget salt tablets, malaria pills, and lots of tape.”

p79  “Throw away all of your underwear ‘cause you won’t need any of it. White isn’t natural in the bush, so keep your white T-shirts for rags. Always wear two pairs of socks, too. When we go to the bush, we use tape around our trouser legs to keep leeches and insect from crawling up. You won’t ever take your boots off in the bush. Don’t shave the day before you go out. Your beard will hold the cammie paint better, and the insect repellent that you mix the paint with won’t sting your face if you haven’t used a razor. Wash out two sets of utilities and let them air-dry outside. The local “mama-san” who runs the laundry uses too much soap...The gooks have good noses, so we won’t help their cause any.”

p80  ‘My rucksack was an old U.S. Army frame pack...The steel frame was tossed aside by most of the Marines: it hung up on vegetation and, more dangerous, the frame could cause the unwanted and unnatural sound of metal banging in the jungle...We never wore helmets in the bush, and we did not wear flak jackets. We never carried sleeping bags. They were considered defensive pieces of equipment.’

p99  ‘But the river had to be crossed, and there was only one way to do it...Each man unhooked his Swiss-seat section of rope and passed it forward toward our point man. Seven lengths of nylon line were now one and were attached to Kegler’s web belt. He removed his pack and slowly sank into the river and then crossed to the other side.’

Guadalcanal

p73  ‘Unlike their comrades on Guadalcanal, they traveled light, “Don’t worry about the food,” their commander, Lieutenant Colonel Merritt A. Edson, told one company commander, “There’s plenty there. Japs eat, too. All you have to do is get it.”’
Guderian

p20  ‘An observer has described this new breed of soldier...“he did not march with shouldered rifle but with un-slung carbine. His knees and elbows are protected by leather patches. He no longer wears a cartridge belt but sticks his cartridges in his pockets. Crossed over his shoulders are two sacks for his hand-grenades.”

This is a description of a WWI stormtrooper. - Ed.

“The Heliborne Company Raid: A Commander’s Challenge”

- ‘Using luminescent tape, we have an SOP symbol sewn on the back of each Marine’s cover as indicated below:

  =             ||          +                       -|

  Support                Assault        Security             Command

  Two nickel-sized dots indicate an element commander and his assistant (usually a platoon commander and platoon sergeant), one dot a squad leader...The luminous tape is very effective because it allows each Marine to see the Marine in front of him in periods of reduced visibility...’

- ‘The key to speed is simple, clearly delineated tasking. To facilitate this, it helps to break down into mission-specific teams: snatch teams, security teams, search teams, and destruction teams. These are further given two tasks each - one primary, one alternate - in such a way that every specific task is duplicated. Have Marines with flexcuffs, gags, blindfolds, information bags, and captive tags already on their possession. Something that is perhaps not so obvious is the need for clear-lens flashlights. Usually, the power gets shot out and with all of the smoke and dust, the Marines searching dark rooms, vehicles, bodies, and anything else...will need a powerful torch. Speed is enhanced if the flashlight is mounted to the weapon, using tie-ties or duct tape, and works best if the flashlight has a...push-button...switch.’

- ‘Actions in the objective area...depend on close coordination with the support element...For marking base of fire positions, high intensity safety yellow chemical lights carried by the squad leaders work well, as do illumination grenades. These work well because they provide readily visible markers in order for every Marine to see the base of fire, and let him know where friendly forces are moving. Of course, they do the same for the enemy, but again your security is your speed. Another effective device is the whistle.’

Inside the Green Berets

p163  ‘In the jungle, uniforms last about a week and are a necessary resupply item. The guerrillas can carry food enough for five days on their persons, so resupply took place about every five days, weather permitting.’

p223  ‘They were a...fine-looking CIDG unit, uniformly dressed...all with bright red scarves tied at their throats. The command element members were also provided with red scarves for instant recognition.’
Inside the LRRPs: Rangers in Vietnam

p114 ‘Field soldiers rarely wore any underwear-other than socks-to prevent rashes and jungle rot in the humid, damp climate. The body needed as much air circulation as possible.’

p131 ‘The LRRPs carried tightly coiled, six-foot “sling ropes” connected to their web gear with a snap link. These ropes were used to tie “Swiss seats” around the soldier’s hips and thighs and then attached to the rappel rope...with the snap link.

The sling ropes were also useful as safety lines in crossing streams and in securing prisoners. They also served as signaling devices when run from man to man in a night position.’

p132 ‘Although it is significant to note what the LRRPs carried on patrol, what they did not carry is also noteworthy. Cigarettes were left behind at the company base, as no smoking whatsoever was allowed in the field. No letters, paperbacks, or any other reading material beyond the Signal Operating Instructions (SOI) was carried. The only identification worn was dog tags - either around the neck or in the boot laces.’

L.R.R.P.: The Professional

p112 ‘I looked at the infantryman’s steel helmet as the symbol of the line trooper, clumsy with ammunition and equipment, scared, soaked with rain and spattered with mud.

Now I could take off my helmet. It was like the infantry, heavy, giving a false sense of security, hard to manage.’

Marine at War

p96 ‘Men let the camouflage covers of their helmets down to shade their necks from the sun...’

The Monk and the Marines

p3 ‘You check your ammo...making a...note to dry off the shells...Little bits of filth are on them, and it has become an obsession with you about a clean weapon and clean ammo. You avoid thinking...why this is so...part training and indoctrination, probably, and because everyone else does it. And a dirty weapon and dirty shells mean the damn thing might not work when you need it, and that makes you afraid.’

p24 ‘The nylon cord had many uses. It was wonderful for...building shelters...out of...poncho and branches...I used the nylon cord for Vietcong prisoners too...Some days I might string a dozen on my clothesline...so I could pull them along, their hands tied with...comwire.’

“Moving Under Fire”

- “Experienced dismounted soldiers outfit themselves with knee and elbow pads...and their load bearing equipment is tightly fitted and always buckled.”
NAM

p213 ‘Everybody had 200 rounds of ammunition for the machine gunners, one or two rockets, M-16 ammo and one mortar round. We were throwing the mortar rounds over to the mortarmen, taking the M-60 ammo to the gunner, trying to get the rockets over to the rocket men. They were going to get us killed delivering this crap to each other.’

On Infantry

p168 ‘According to Marshall, the Marines at least outstripped the army in getting down to carrying only basic combat essentials.’

Rangers at War: LRRPs in Vietnam

p64 ‘Staff Sergeant Hancock tried frantically to find the team’s emergency URC-10 survival radio among the dead and wounded rangers but could not locate it.’

Each man in the patrol should know the exact location of all team gear. - Ed.

p336 ‘The Vietnamese...did not suffer the same degree of susceptibility to medical hardships because they wore lighter clothing and sandals, could dry their skin at night, and were better acclimatized to tropical conditions.’

p339 ‘Company N Rangers reported their preference for ropes and ladders fitted with working red-filtered flashlights attached to the ends of the lines, even in daylight. The lights made it easier for the rangers to see separate ropes being lowered, and pilots were able to judge hover altitude as the lights neared or touched the ground.’

RECONDO: LRRPs in the 101st Airborne

p19 ‘He began a methodical inspection of his equipment, raking out each item and then replacing it so he could find it by feel...

“You’ve got to find everything quickly in the pitch-black of a triple-canopy jungle.”’

p183 ‘I packed my gear Recondo style, even down to the smallest item. That way, if I was killed or wounded at night, my teammates would know where to look for my equipment.


Team Yankee

p104 ‘Only after...the equipment had been squared away were the men free to tend to...personal needs and hygiene. The Team worked under the old cavalry principle, “The horse, the saddle, the man.”’
12: Green Troops

Guadalcanal Remembered

p150 ‘A battalion of the 7th Marines had just moved into position...Still being green troops they were trigger happy. They blasted away all night with rifles, machine guns, and hand grenades.’

p151 ‘The 7th Marines were at it again…From the noise you would have supposed a major battle was going on…It seems inevitable that troops never before under fire will shoot all night at nothing.’

Guderian

p69 ‘Meanwhile his two motorized divisions had also been behaving with some of the nervousness characteristic of unblooded soldiers of even the best quality.’

p73 ‘Officer casualties had been disproportionately high...as Guderian knew, high officer casualties are always a feature of the first battles of a war, green troops needing a great deal in the way of self-sacrificing leadership.’

L.R.R.P.: The Professional

p81 ‘The...sergeant...forgot...he had a cartridge in the chamber of his M-16...and pumped the bolt. The sound of that bolt slamming forward was as loud as a hammer striking steel...Before I had my rifle to my shoulder, other bolts had clanged open and shut...Fore an instant the perimeter was a flurry of clattering rifle bolts…’

Although everyone in this green unit was already loaded, peacetime habits were hard to break. - Ed.

NAM

p92 ‘The first month or two, everybody is trigger-happy at night. Everybody. The guy looks in the wire and sees and old C-ration box. The breeze hits it just right...He pops three rounds at it...All of a sudden, the machine gunner...pulls the trigger...’

A Rumor of War

p93 ‘[For] one marine...boredom has given way to terror. He has fired several shots at something he heard moving in front of his position. I am raging at him: “You goddamned amateur. You’re supposed to throw a grenade if there’s something there, not fire your weapon. The muzzle-flash could give your position away. You ought to know that.”’

p124 ‘Sentries saw all sorts of imaginary terrors in the swirling whiteness; one marine, mistaking a bush for a man, fired several shots that kept everyone’s nerves on edge...’

p226 ‘One-Three, newly returned to Vietnam with all unseasoned troops, was having a fire-fight with figments of its imagination.’


**Tunnel Warfare**

p77  “They marveled at everything they saw,” he said, “everything seemed strange and new to them-the jungle, the fruits, the water buffalo, even the chickens. Again and again they would stop and stare, even pick thing up. Not only were they easy targets for our snipers, but I realized the best way to kill them was with more booby traps...I was sure they would work well for us.”

_A Vietnamese Lieutenant’s observation of U.S. soldiers. - Ed._

**The World’s Elite Forces**

p145  ‘The remaining four Scouts fell prone and began firing. Being untrained, the men soon exhausted the four magazines of ammunition each carried, and would have been easy targets for the terrorists...’
13: Grenades

AIR CAV

p78 ‘His platoon was...in foxholes as a night ambush. The enemy...began an intense and accurate grenade attack. (The advantage of grenades in night fighting is that it’s difficult to tell where they come from. Rifles and machine guns give away their position by muzzle flashes.)’

The Battle of Hurtgen Forest

p58 ‘Night in the forest was...beyond description. A man couldn’t...step out of his foxhole to relieve himself with any certainty that he would find his way back...Trees...five feet away were not visible. It was not possible to throw a grenade at night without the fear that it would bounce off a tree and come back...into the foxhole. Resourceful GIs overcame this problem by placing stones on the edge of the hole in daylight so that they could tell...a safe throwing lane in the dark.’

Fields of Fire

p208 ‘We did dumb-ass things. We hung grenades from our pockets by the spoons...and then lost ‘em in the dark because they fell off. We straightened the pins on ‘em for quick action and then got so excited that we’d pick the grenades up by the pin and it would pull loose and we blew each other up.”

Fighting on Guadalcanal

p2 ‘Some of my men thought their hand grenades were too heavy. They tossed them aside when no one was looking. Later they would have given six month’s pay for one hand grenade.”

p22 ‘The Jap has a great deal of respect for our hand grenade...Do you ever practice throwing it in wooded country?’

p46 ‘We had a sad accident the other day. A man hung a hand grenade on a bandolier. A vine pulled the pin - two men were killed. Empty bandoliers are okay in which to place hand grenades. We have had hand grenades left around at night. Then a Company...gets an order to move and hand grenades are lost.”

p57 ‘I would suggest some training in throwing hand grenades in woods.”

p63 ‘Most of the fighting here has been carried out at extremely close range, and there has been as much throwing of hand grenades as in firing a weapon.”

p67 ‘Individuals must have thorough practice in throwing hand grenades in woods. They must reach a much higher degree of proficiency in the art of camouflage...He should know...what a sniper’s bullet sounds like, and what overhead machine gun and artillery fire sound like.”
Force Recon Diary, 1969

p110 ‘Sergeant Peterson...rigged two...extra grenades. Instead of using wire, he pulled out a length of dental floss and used it to tie off the grenades. Passing the white line across his cammie stick gave it the look of a white and green vine.’

L.R.R.P.: The Professional

p225 ‘My grenade hit a tree, bounced back, and exploded too close.’

A Rumor of War

p204 ‘A sentry...was killed by a grenade, his own. (The sentry had seen, or thought he had seen, infiltrators moving toward our wire. He tried to throw a grenade at them but his hand slipped off the spoon. The grenade went off and blew the sentry in half.)’
14: Helicopters

AIR CAV

p154  ‘But the NVA attackers were armed with the strongest antiaircraft weapons so far...The Soviets had supplied the NVA with a new antiaircraft weapon, the SA-7 Grail heat-seeking missile...The SA-7s destroyed five Cobra gunships in less than 30 minutes on 12 May.’

Clear and Present Danger

p6  ‘It was just light enough to see without the night-vision goggles, the dawn twilight that the helicopter pilots hated...

It was supposed to be a covert insertion...The Blackhawk dove for the ground and pulled up short...The Blackhawk could touch down only for a moment...Chavez...fell flat to the ground. The squad did the same, allowing the Blackhawk to lift off immediately...It would reappear around the southern end of a hill as though it had never stopped. Behind it, the squad assembled and moved out into the treeline...The sergeant...led them off at a dead run.’

p579  ‘They were at the extraction site. It was a clearing just downhill from a peak of eight thousand feet, lower than the really big crests, and conductive to a covert approach.’

“The Heliborne Company Raid: A Commander’s Challenge”

•  ‘Because raids are usually conducted at night, the commander can use a combined system of chemical light markings and “smart cards.” This is done to minimize flight deck and extract LZ confusion. The chemical lights are taped to the inside of the port and starboard windows amidship. Red, blue, and green chemical lights are used with a numbering system that corresponds to the sequential numbering of the helicopters by elements. So red 1 and 2 are assault 1 and 2; green 1,2,3 and 4 are support and command 1,2,3, and 4; and blue 1 and 2 are security 1 and 2. In addition, we issue each heliteam leader a card on which he writes the number of passengers, landing zone, landing site within zone, his unit, his stick number, and the side number of the helicopter he is supposed to board.’

“One Place, Three Wars: Part 1”

•  “We discovered...that our resupply procedures were giving away the location of our patrols. We learned from captured documents...that the enemy placed people in...trees so they could see where the helicopters were...The enemy then used this information to prepare ambushes.”

“One method of resupplying patrols that were sent out for long periods of time was the use of caches. We could hide supplies in certain area, then come back with patrols and use those supplies. To deceive the enemy, our helicopters would drop dummy resupplies (old newspapers and empty boxes) at five or six areas, hoping to lure the enemy to those areas. The helicopters would loiter at the dummy areas but would drop supplies quickly at our true location.”

“One problem we had to solve was how to signal our position to the helicopter without using smoke. We devised a sturdy balloon that we would push through the canopy until it was flush
with the top of the trees. It could not be seen from the horizon, but a helicopter flying overhead could easily spot the location.”

**Rangers at War: LRRPs in Vietnam**

**p75** ‘Suddenly a sleek AH-1G Cobra gunship swooped into the center of the rice field. The…rangers climbed aboard - two on the skids, one on a rocket launcher, and one on the small wing - and the Cobra attack helicopter lifted off. The incident was one of the only “Cobra extractions” of the Vietnam war.’

**p165** ‘Ranger integration with the 2d Squadron of the 17th Cavalry guaranteed responsive aerial support. A gunship was in immediate support of each team on patrol.’

**A Rumor of War**

**p275** ‘We...were...told to form helicopter teams. The company shifted from its regular formation into eight-man teams with the precision of a school band performing a movement at halftime.’
“Light Infantry Combat Service Support”

- ‘Class I is broken down by platoon. Platoon breaks are much more tactically sound, since light infantry should operate in mutually supporting platoon patrol bases.’

- ‘At the JRC...when light infantry units in the defense are attacked by the mechanized opposing force, many of them have difficulty conducting defensive operations...light infantry rifle platoons occupying defensive positions also need readily available pioneer tools to use in preparing defensive positions...We recommend that each company supply sergeant have a trailer loaded with a defense kit in the field trains...The following items should be carried on the trailer: Two D-handle shovels, two picks, and one axe per rifle squad; and a footlocker loaded with communications wire...the TA 312 and TA-1 telephones...

Finally, the trailer should contain 3,000 or 4,000 sandbags and enough picket pounders to allow each platoon to work at the same time…’

“Logistic Preparation of the Battlefield”

- ‘During a light infantry combat operation, an innovative means was used to provide emergency resupply of water. With no landing zone available near the fighting unit, and no time to cut one out the dense jungle, rubber bags were inserted into 155-mm shell casings, partially filled with water and tied off at the top. The casings were then dropped from a helicopter through the jungle canopy within recovery distance of the unit on the ground.’
16: Marching

Battle Cry

p341 ‘I did a quick patch up job on my feet; the two heel blisters were...ready to pop. I cut around them and let the water run off and swabbed them down with iodine, then ripped a pair of skivvy drawers and folded them into small patches to pad and sponge the area. I taped them tight so the pad wouldn’t slip, and put on three pairs of dry socks and laced the shoes on tight.’

Fighting on Guadalcanal

p43 ‘We toughened up by bivouacking...at the combat ranges...In order to teach our platoons to keep off the road, we make the platoons march in the fields alongside the road when they moved from one combat area to another.’

Fix Bayonets! and Other Stories

p147 ‘He gave some very hard words and his last candle-end to a pale private who admitted blistered heels, and then stood over the man while he tallowed his...socks.’

Rangers at War: LRRPs in Vietnam

p16 ‘Company C “Jayhawk Lerps,”...boasted annual first places in the European-hosted international four-day marching tournaments. Patrol team preparation for this strenuous event consisted of hiking twenty-five miles daily, with fully loaded gear and weapons that totaled eighty to ninety pounds per soldier, through the hilly pathways of rural Bavaria.’
“Military Operations on Urban Terrain”

- “A soldier should watch the muzzle of his weapon...and never let it extend around a corner before he does. This provides a dangerous signature. One man should...low-crawl up to a corner and peek around at ground level. If he has a survival mirror, he should use it to peek around for him.”

- “A good technique for gaining entry to second and third floors is for each man to carry a pole section from a camouflage system. A section is about one meter long and weighs about one pound. The sections can be put together in seconds to form poles of varying lengths, and a fire team can elevate a man to a second- or third-story window...”

- “As each room is cleared...symbols can be applied to safe rooms...After a chemical light is activated, it can be broken and the luminous liquid applied to the walls in cleared rooms. This way, the enemy cannot remove the symbols.”

TET-1968

p110 ‘The Marines employed smoke grenades to cover their movements, but the NVA used this as a signal: “Everything that was on our flank just opened up on that street.” To counter the enemy tactic, the Marines would “pop smoke, “ determine the general location of the enemy...and then...fire the 106mm round. With the backblast...creating a cloud of dust...the infantrymen would seize the opportunity to cross the street.’

p115 ‘All the battalions obtained basic tourist maps of Hue, which numbered the prominent sites and buildings. The Marines used the numbers to coordinate their movements.’

p118 ‘The battalion commander...liked the 3.5-inch rockets that provided him with the penetrating power to punch holes into thick-walled buildings.’

p118 ‘With the fighting at close range...battalions made little use...of supporting arms...Neither unit used heavy artillery...As Lieutenant Colonel Gravel explained, they could not observe the results of a mission well enough: “You lose the rounds in the buildings, in the streets, and you don’t know where, and you have a difficult time with perspective.”

The Marine battalions’...mortars took up the supporting role slack. Captain Downes...employed 81mm mortars within 35 meters of his position...if you put enough 81 rounds on top of a building, pretty soon the roof falls in.’
18: Night Combat

Battle Cry

p235  ‘Fifty-eight minutes more. Don’t sit...stay on your knees...You can’t sleep on your knees...if you doze, you’ll fall over and wake up...His rifle dropped to the ground, his eyes popped open...’

Clear and Present Danger

p540  ‘They were moving like...soldiers...On the bottom side of his PVS-7 goggles was a small infrared light for use in reading maps. Invisible to the human eye, it would show up like a beacon to anyone wearing another PVS-7...Ding tipped his goggles up to expose the IR light and blinked it three times. He dropped his night scope back into place just in time to see the other one do the same.’

“Experience with Assault Guns”

•  ‘Prepare…machine gun ammunition…without tracers for night combat. This way you won’t give away your position.’

Fighting on Guadalcanal

p4  ‘When we got here, a lot of our young men were confused at night. They were not used to jungle at night. They could not use their compasses at night, and we did not have enough compasses.’

p31  ‘Insist on night training, but don’t train day and night. If I were training my Regiment again, working 7 days a week, I would train three nights and four days.’

p64  ‘The enemy...When given his choice, he operates exclusively at night.”

RECONDO: LRPPs in the 101st Airborne

p248  ‘If men have difficulty in staying awake, have them kneel rather than sit.’

A Rumor of War

p95  ‘As I have been trained to do, I look at the outline of the figure rather than directly at it. If you look straight at an object at night, your eyes play tricks on you. So I look at the edges of the form, the figure, the bush, whatever it is. Yes, it is a man, frozen in mid-stride.’

Team Yankee

p92  ‘Early morning is the best time for detecting targets with the thermal sight because the ground and trees lack any warmth from the long absent sun.’
19: Patrolling

Clear and Present Danger

p209 ‘The squad arrived twenty minutes after he called them...having “hooked” and reversed their path to make sure that there were no trailers.’

p220 ‘He examined the map carefully, making several mental notes and again committing the details to memory. The map had no marks on it, of course. If lost or captured, such marks would tell the wrong people things that they ought not to know.’

p339 ‘He did not move in a straight line to the night’s objective, following instead the Army’s approved procedure of constantly veering left and right of the direction in which he was actually traveling. Every half hour he’d stop, double back, and wait until the rest of the squad was in view. Then it was their turn to rest for a few minutes, checking their own back for people who might take an interest in the new visitors to the jungle highlands.’

p494 ‘They didn’t move in single file. Too many people following a single path made for tracks. Though Chavez was at point, with Oso twenty meters behind, the rest of the squad was advancing in line abreast, with frequent changes of direction, shifting almost like a football backfield, but over a much larger area. Soon they’d start looping their path, waiting to see if someone might be following.’

Fighting on Guadalcanal

p38 “Sir, how about training in the field with short rations?...If I were training my unit again, I would really have some high-class patrol training. I would do everything with these patrols I could possibly think of to include losing them and making them go across country without maps or compasses.”

p68 ‘Men should receive training in patience...Training in patience is needed as sometimes the men will be required to remain motionless and quiet for hours at a time.’

Force Recon Diary, 1969

p83 ‘A schedule was posted...that detailed...the time to test-fire our weapons, pack our...gear, test our communications...and...present ourselves for our team leader’s detailed, final equipment inspection...The assistant team leader gave the command...to fall in for inspection, and we did so according to the order of march...As Sergeant Chapman stood in front of each man, he instructed that Marine to jump up and down several times and then shake his body. That was a noise check. Loose equipment was secured by dull black electrical tape, anything that was shiny was covered over or cammied up, anything that made a distinguishable sound was muffled and any ordinance or special equipment was physically displayed.

Each one of us knew who carried what, and where it was kept.

Each man’s blood type was made known to the entire team in case of a requirement for an emergency blood transfusion. This information was written in each member’s notebook. I also informed each man as to exactly where I carried my box of six morphine injectable Syrettes.

This system of sharing all of our common information was...good field sense. If any one man was injured of killed, whether it was during daylight or in the black of night, we each knew exactly who carried what specific equipment and exactly where it was kept on each member of our team.’
Note that each member kept a notebook - Ed.

p91  ‘The signal to halt was passed down from the team leader, and the hand-and-arm signal for “minefield” came next.’

p92  ‘There was a reason for this order of march. If our team sighted a numerically superior enemy...it was far easier to...change...direction 180 degrees, and then move away...with an experienced pointman, assistant team leader, and secondary radio operator instantly in the lead, without having to turn the entire team around.’

p94  ‘We made our final plans to move into our harbor site, the place where the team would sleep, but there was a certain method to entering the site.

First, the tail-end charlie had to make absolutely certain that no one had followed the team from our last resting place. He would remain behind as the team moved toward the site, and he insured our safety from any possible enemy attack from the rear. The team...would begin a slow buttonhook movement...Anyone who might have followed us would certainly be heard as they followed the buttonhook trail and moved around the outside of the team.

Once the team was in place, all eight men occupied an area no greater than eight feet in diameter...The ritual of moving into our harbor site was repeated every night, as was the emplacement of...claymore mines.’

p106  ‘We had not taken any return fire from the NVA, but Chapman said that it would only be a matter of time...He halted the team and told us that we should move straight ahead for approximately fifty meters, then each of us would turn to out left forty-five degrees and move forward another fifty meters, turn back to the right forty-five degrees, and then continue on until we got the signal to stop.

Anyone who was following our trail through the elephant grass would be following a single trail that suddenly became seven trails, all angling off to the left.’

p159  “The Gurkas have perfected several types of ambush...The first one...we will study is the prisoner snatch...”

“Terrain will dictate whether of not you’ll be able to pull off a prisoner snatch. The first key to success is to find and observe a trail that turns sharply to the left or to the right. The setup would be the same as for a hasty ambush. four men will position themselves next to the trail where the vegetation offers them the best concealment. The fifth man will position himself, hidden, at the bend in the trail, and able to fire on full automatic down the long axis of the trial into the kill zone. The sixth man will be positioned on the opposite side of the trail, unarmed, and directly across from his four teammates. When the right size group of gooks is sighted approaching, the team will move into position. Knowing that the point man is never the leader of the group, we assume that the number two or three man in the group is in charge. He’s the one we’re after. Let’s say that it’s number three. Once he gets across from our hidden-and unarmed man of the opposite side of the trail, our man dives across the trail taking out their number three man. Our man at the bend in the trail fires his weapon low and straight down the long axis of the trail. The other four men take out the rest of the gooks, and the team moves out of the ambush site with the prisoner. Any questions?”

p201  ‘Each time that we moved into our harbor site, we tried to allow ourselves enough daylight to be able to study the immediate area. Each team member knew exactly where the rest of the team was sleeping. The location of trees, stumps, bushes, and, most importantly, the makeup of the terrain were noted by each member of the team because what appeared as a tree or a stump during the fading hour of twilight could easily look like a man...in the imagination of whoever was on radio watch during the night.’
Guadalcanal Remembered

p269 ‘The 2nd Raiders had...demonstrated that well-trained, jungle-wise troops, living on light rations (raisins, bacon, tea, and rice), disposing of heavy automatic firepower, could operate independently and with deadly effectiveness away from an established supply base.’

Inside the LRRPs: Rangers in Vietnam

p53 ‘The 173rd used an island...as a training area for small-unit patrolling...these training missions were carried out in the jungle for periods of up to a month with the only resupply coming by air drop.’

p125 ‘The standard infantry machine gun, the…M-60...was not ordinarily carried on patrol. Weighing over twenty-two pounds, the M-60 was too heavy and bulky for a team that had to move both quickly and quietly.’

p143 ‘Patrols were planned for a duration of five to seven days with more than a week being the unusual. The reason for limiting the length of patrols was both humane and logistical. LRRPs slept little in the field, and the intensity of remaining constantly alert in territory where they were far outnumbered was extremely taxing. Everything needed on the mission had to be carried on team members’ backs, as a resupply chopper would compromise their location.’

p150 ‘The operations officer...developed recon zones for each patrol. These zones were typically four square kilometers and were in the form of a two-by-two kilometer box or with irregular boundaries that followed the contours of stream beds or mountain ridges.’

“JRTC: National Guard LRS Lessons”

- ‘Team members should study the information until they can brief all phases of the mission using a sterile map.’

- ‘Water resupply is another important aspect...Each of our...teams carried two full five-gallon water cans with them. One team rigged the cans so they could be carried by a two-man team. The other team carried them in rucksacks, which worked much more effectively.’

- ‘Each team member must be prepared to brief his part of the mission, and the team leader will probably be asked to estimate the team’s chances of mission accomplishment...’

- ‘The escape and evasion plan...must allow for execution during each phase of the mission...The fact that an LRS team is not uniformed and equipped like conventional units can lead to problems when it encounters other units. The thorough coordination of the team’s recognition signals for friendly units and aircraft will also reduce the team’s chances of being shot by friendly forces.’

“Kaneohe Bay Marines Trade Ideas With Tongans, Australians”

- “The difference between the Australian and American defensive position is very important. Instead of setting up a 360-degree perimeter, the Australians set up a ‘triangle harbor point.’ The three Mags-58s are set at the corners of the triangle and the perimeter is cordoned off with string connecting the guns. Shelters are set up along the string and movement to and from the guns is
done by walking alongside the string. Anything outside the perimeter is considered ‘enemy.’
There are no listening or observation posts set up. Anyone needing to use the head outside the
perimeter must clear it with someone manning a gun, ensuring he returns the same way he left.”

L.R.R.P.: The Professional

p10 ‘While on the move, the point would watch his front and both sides. The team leader, five meters
behind him, would watch over the point’s head for tree platforms…or snipers, while keeping the compass
azimuth and marking a pace count…’

p13 ‘To prevent the enemy from…tracking a team into its overnight position, it was policy to wait in
one place until almost dark, then to change locations quietly, so a night attack would come where the
team had been…’

“LRSD Isolation Briefback Procedure”

• “When I served…as the isolation area director for the 10th Special Forces Group…we required
every team member to brief the group commander without notes. (Each had a specific area of
responsibility…). Everything was memorized. The map used for the briefing was blank, and such
details as the infiltration point, hide site, routes, and exfiltration point were briefed from memory.

Also, the group commander might call on any team member to brief any other member’s area of
responsibility. As a result, all members knew all phases of the team’s operation—everything was
cross-walked and coordinated—and not just their own area. Impossible, you say? Not at all. Each
man of the team should have his area of expertise, but he must know all portions of the operations
order.

This idea was not original with us. We got it from our British Allies.”

The Monk and the Marines

p100 ‘The VC…had an ambush of their own set up on the road. Except we didn’t use the road. We
paralleled it…There are two…kinds of ambushes. They are called the A and the L. Those are the shapes
an ambush takes. You form a semicircle, an A, and let the enemy walk into it and then shut it on him and
catch him in a crossfire, of use the L shape, which is also a crossfire but easier to break contact from in
case the bums you ambush are too hard to crack. The L shape lets you split out of there easier…When we
had a big ambush, we used an A, and when we went out on patrols at night, we used an L. That way we
could beat feet in case we had to.

We were going along real quiet parallel with the road, but back a ways, when we smelled the VC
ambush. I say “smell” because that is literally how it was. You can’t always depend on your eyes at night
or…in heavy brush…so you learn to use the other senses…your ears and your nose. What gave the VC
away was, we smelled them…

We sniffed and liked at one another. I tapped my nose to the man behind me in the line. He
looked puzzled for a second, and then he smelled it too, and his face beamed in recognition. Then we just
remained still, no one moving. Listening and straining our eyes into the darkness, we saw where they
were, in some hedges off to one side of the road…We could see…one butt lit in the darkness…Actually
three VC were smoking…’

See Field Skills, Chapter 7, for other examples of smell and light discipline. – Ed.
“One Place, Three Wars: Part 1”

- “No matter how experienced we became, however, we always found during our rehearsals mistakes that needed correction. One reason for this was the constant flow of new troops into the companies...and they had to be trained...”

Rangers at War: LRRPs in Vietnam

p29 ‘Break-contact drills were rehearsed constantly during stand-down, and teams practiced this vital patrol survival facet daily. The drill was finalized by a live-fire exercise where the point man fired up the front, the patroller behind him first threw a grenade and took up the fire as the point man “broke contact,” and the sequence was repeated at dizzy speed until every team member was through the rehearsal.’

p85 ‘Comparisons between division ranger methodology showed that patrols operating at greater distances...were ultimately safer because the enemy was not expecting them.’

p135 ‘The most successful patrol techniques in the 25th Infantry Division were found to be stay-behind surveillance missions. The teams arranged these missions by mixing with regular forces and remaining in position...Missions lasting three days or more were favored, because the Viet Cong became less vigilant after they believed the Americans were gone.’

p163 ‘Unless compromised by enemy activity, each team patrolled for seventy-two hours and ideally covered a 25,000-square-yard area.’

p166 ‘Monsoon patrols carried enough rations and ammunition for ten days, in case inclement weather precluded scheduled lift-out, but added weight lessened ground mobility.’

p174 ‘The...highland streams were turned into raging torrents that could be negotiated only by using long ropes tied to overhanging trees. Ranger teams disdained carrying the once-customary nylon ropes on monsoon missions, because the latter were now considered too heavy and cumbersome. The lack of long ropes forced patrollers to tie individual sling-ropes together into one safety line. Individuals could cross the rope combination without wearing heavy equipment, but knotted field-expedient lines caused trouble hauling rucksacks and radios across rain-swollen streams.’

p248 ‘Teams inserted into the Reconnaissance Zone were assigned six-kilometer squares known as “patrol boxes.” The patrol boxes were chosen according to brigade operating requirements...Patrol duration within the Reconnaissance Zone was ideally five days. During the first four days and three nights the teams were to reconnoiter signs of activity. Patrols were positioned along infiltration routes...On the last day the teams selected a final ambush position and radioed for extraction after executing a deliberate contact, a tactic that conserved scarce helicopter resources.’

p298 ‘The United States Army Vietnam compiled statistics, through mid-1968, for all long-range patrols that revealed one-third of all patrols were actually less than twenty-four hours in length, one-third of patrols were between twenty-four and seventy-two hours, and the remaining one-third of the patrols lasted seventy-two hours or longer. Some formations, typified by the 4th Infantry Division, had planned their patrols to last five days in dry weather conditions and three days during the rainy season.’
RECONDO: LRPPs in the 101st Airborne

p137  ‘Graduates of the MACV Recondo School provide the unit commander with the following...capabilities: They may be infiltrated into enemy-controlled territory for periods of up to seven days without being resupplied.’

p151  ‘Caldwell started out as tail gunner and was...one of the most important people on the patrol. A good tail gunner can sterilize your trail so no one knows you were ever there. He would often remain behind for fifteen to twenty minutes to make sure no one was following. Tail gunner was as important a position as point.’

p156  ‘Even in choosing a camp site, we learned to take a little more time and be a little extra crafty. We would always choose two NDPs a hundred yards apart. At the first site, we would go through the motions of setting up our perimeter, even sitting down and eating. After it got dark, we would sneak away to the second site, where we would spend the night.’

p163  ‘More rounds cracked overhead...I emptied my magazine into the enemy position. Rounds were now coming in from both sides. I emptied my second magazine into the jungle ahead. Then I turned to run for the rear of the patrol, as I had been taught.

My slack man was not there to back me up. He had lit out along our back trail with the first shots. I was alone. This was not my Ranger team - I didn’t really know these guys, and they didn’t know me. We had been taught to fire, then leapfrog back to the end of the patrol line. Each man in the column would cover the man to his front as he withdrew. In this manner, there was a continuous hail of fire keeping the enemy at bay until the entire team had broken contact.’

A Rumor of War

p107  ‘The column started to bunch up...It was a phenomenon I had seen before: in the jungle, men tended to draw together, seeking the reassurance that comes from being physically close to one another, even though that increased the risk of...one round killing several men at once.’

Sword Point

p28  ‘When the unit assembled...for precombat inspections, Evans...found that the men were hopelessly overburdened with useless equipment and far too much ammunition...It reminded Evans of the Grenada operation, when people had taken all of their military equipment with them, only to discard it once they reached the island and found they didn’t need it. Today...he inspected every man’s load and equipment. Anything...of no value was discarded into a pile at the end of the company line. When they were finished, the pile was higher than Evans.’

p288  ‘Each night before...they moved out, Duncan inspected his platoon, checking the men, their weapons and the pitiful remains of their equipment. In spite of the desperateness of their plight...Duncan demanded discipline. His nightly inspections were a method of reminding the men that they were soldiers.’
The World’s Elite Forces

p15  ‘Four rifle companies (A to D). C company had been designated a special Patrol company and operated in front of the battalion...’

p27  ‘Guides were provided by the men of D (Patrol) Company who had reconnoitered the approach routes and minefields...’

p138  ‘The Australians’ use of small patrols in Vietnam, living off the land for up to a fortnight at a time, paid dividends when compared with the more conventional American tactics...Although good soldiers when they controlled the situation, the Vietcong were basically lazy, and their discipline became slack when they felt themselves safe from observation. SAS patrols often caught them unawares in their base camps, where they carelessly lit cooking fires and became drunk and rowdy on rice wine and native been. Sentries were rarely posted...’

*A fortnight is two weeks, fourteen days. – Ed.*
“The Heliborne Company Raid: A Commander’s Challenge”

- ‘Prisoners…are somewhat trickier…Take their boots and belts off, flex cuff their hands behind their backs…then blindfold and gag them. Use three Marines to move and guard each prisoner…This is the snatch team referred to earlier. This snatch team is responsible for the prisoner from the time he is captured until he is turned over to the ship’s security forces for debrief…Having the same snatch team with the prisoner the whole time provides a simple chain of custody of the prisoner, making the S-2’s job easier.’

Inside the Green Berets

p225 ‘A…soldier was propped against a tree, being interrogated…The soldier was obviously seriously wounded…but the decision was made to leave him, as we had to move fast…We could not carry him, and we weren’t numerous enough to leave a unit or detail with him.’

They Jumped at Midnight

p201 ‘The young sergeant…wore his regulation dogtags and carried no weapon. If captured, a likely possibility, he would plead that he was an escaped prisoner and not an armed soldier in disguise.’

p206 ‘“What’ll we do with the bastard?” someone called out.
“We can’t let him go or he’ll spill the beans,” said another, “His comrades will be after us with a large force in minutes.”
“Knife him!” a voice called out.
“No,” replied Captain Whitemore, “There’ll be none of that. Get his equipment off him and turn him loose.”’

20: Prisoners
21: Tactical Deception

Chickenhawk

p291 ‘Part two called for convincing Charlie that we were landing huge forces on top of the ridges along the long valley...We did this by flying empty ships for two days to normally prepared LZs along the ridge tops...We landed and stayed on the ground for thirty seconds or so and then left. Later we’d fly out to “resupply” these units at regular intervals.’

The End of the Line

p3 ‘Several hours after dusk, six men in U.S. Marine uniforms – one of them as tall and husky as a linebacker – walked up to the...perimeter...and stood talking, pointing occasionally at strong points. They froze when challenged by a security team, hesitated for too long a second when asked to identify themselves-and died in a hail of rifle fire.’

p82 ‘A sentry dog...alerted his handler to movement outside the defensive wire. A few minutes later six men appeared out of the darkness, stopped, and began talking quietly as they studied the Marine defenses. Second Lieutenant Niles B. Buffington took a squad to investigate and...found “six men dressed like Marines.” When one of the figures reached toward his belt, the Marines opened fire...Documents on the bodies identified the dead men as enemy regimental officers.’

“Experience with Assault Guns”

- ‘To cause enemy snipers to show themselves, it is useful to carry a straw dummy, which for this purpose is provided with a helmet or cap.’

The Other Battle of the Bulge: Operation Northwind

p29 ‘At five-thirty the Germans attacked...Some tried the old tricks on the Americans. “Hold your fire!” they yelled and the americans did just that, thinking the Germans were coming in to surrender.’

Rangers at War: LRRPs in Vietnam

p22 ‘Combat patrols...were also equipped with enemy weapons...Foreign weapons were used primarily either to created deceptive fire or to confuse enemy spotters who glimpsed a lead patroller (point man) with enemy equipment.’

Sword Point

p220 ‘By keeping away from our actual fighting positions we make it difficult for the enemy to accurately predict where our kill zones and battle positions are...this will dilute his preparatory bombardments and keep him guessing as to where we are.’
p265  ‘Behind him a crew of engineers were placing round wooden blocks on the north lip of the anti-tank ditch, in the same pattern used in laying a surface mine field.’

**Tunnel Warfare**

p145  ‘They flew low and fast and were deadly accurate. We made dummies holding rifles up so that we could attract them and shoot at them.’
22: Tactical Intelligence

Fields of Fire

p155 ‘Hodges scanned the fields. there were no…babysans lazing on the backs of water bulls. When water bulls disappeared from the fields, it was always the first sign that the enemy was near, very near, in large numbers. It reminded Hodges of the TV Westerns, when the town cleared the streets before a gunfight.’

p205 ‘I have learned those...esoteric skills...that mark me as one of you. That loose-boweled piles of shit, too much shit from overeating, plopped randomly around the outer dikes of a ville, mean trouble.’

p264 ‘Well, they won’t mortar us, he reasoned...’cause the increments will get wet and won’t ignite.’

p323 “We’re lucky as hell it’s raining, or we’d be getting mortared right now.”

Inside the Green Berets

p224 ‘The presence of an antiaircraft company certainly meant the presence of their ground forces, probably at the division level, for the weapons are assigned to the divisional artillery regiment and are not found in the infantry battalion or regiment in the NVA.’

Marine at War

p42 “They’re walking mortars back through the swamp toward us,” Buck said. “...I don’t think they’ll get much shrapnel effect on that soft ground. The stuff will just sink in.”

The Third World War

p15 ‘He followed the tanks through his sight - watching and waiting for the command tank. They had been taught to recognize it, with little difficulty, by the way it moved. He picked it up as it passed, and with a muttered prayer fired.’

p201 ‘Junior commanders…had been taught to look for the command tank. Its behavior pattern at company level, for instance, gave it a quite unmistakable signature...Take out the command tank; this would not stop the attack but it would at least blunt the follow-through.’
23: Tracking

Clear and Present Danger

p465 "Tracks, trails?"
   "Nothing less'n two, maybe three days old."
   Ramirez knew how to determine the age of a trail, but couldn’t do it as well as Sergeant Chavez.

Force Recon Diary, 1969

p103 ‘We had come to a trail that appeared to have been used heavily and recently. Sandal tracks marked the edges of the trail, and the patterns made from boots were not ours. Whoever had made the imprints had carried heavy packs, as the marks were sunk low into the ground, and the rain proved the tracks to be fresh.

   The tracks showed the direction of movement was to the west, and we crossed the trail, not intending to walk on it. One of the first rules that we were taught was that a reconnaissance team “will never, ever, ever, walk on a trail.”

p200 ‘The evidence of frequent and heavy usage was obvious. Boot prints were clearly visible as were the tire-track marks of the famous Ho Chi Minh sandals commonly worn by North Vietnamese soldiers. Two thin sets of bicycle tracks had hardened in the mud on the edge of the trail.’

Inside the LRRPs: Rangers in Vietnam

p28 ‘The two great points of superiority of the native...soldier...are his absolute knowledge of the country and his perfect ability to take care of himself at all times and under all circumstances....Every track in the trail, mark in the grass, scratch on the bark of a tree, explains itself....He can tell to an hour, almost, when the man or animal making them passed by, and, like a hound, will keep on the scent until he catches up with the object of his pursuit....Approaching the enemy his vigilance is a curious thing to witness. He avoids appearing suddenly upon the crest of a hill, knowing his figure projected against the sky can bat such time be discerned from a great distance...’

L.R.R.P.: The Professional

p11 ‘Gathering...intelligence was a skill best learned on the job. Chipped bark at shoulder level on the trees alongside a trail indicated the men who had passes were carrying crew-served weapons on their shoulders. Enemy soldiers seen without their rucksacks were not far from their basecamp. Full canteens and packs hung heavily on the backs of those wearing them, advertising they were on the march.’

p27 ‘“Commo wire!” he exclaimed...It was gray Chinese issue, not the black U.S. Army wire. “Follow it,” Mott ordered...The splice was insulated by paper, and the paper was still fresh.’

NAM

p149 ‘All we every saw were a couple of sneaker marks...I was following a blood trail...The color really changes as you follow along. It gets more bubbly, frothy-looking and wetter...We were pretty upset
when we saw the guy...He had on black tennis shoes, black canvas...I had seen the print of his sneakers every once in a while on the ground.’

Rangers at War: LRRPs in Vietnam

p39 ‘The ARVN rangers...usually walk point...Most of them can tell you the difference between an enemy soldier and a local civilian just be listening to them walking through the jungle.’

p49 ‘The team...heard barking from enemy tracker dogs behind them...After this incident all Company E teams began carrying black pepper. The rear scout spread it periodically behind the patrol to nullify dog pursuit.’

p173 ‘The rangers spotted a camouflaged trail cut with machetes about a week before and followed it past an abandoned enemy sleeping area...Later the rangers returned to the trail and discovered fresh footprints of a squad-sized unit...The patrol also noticed that the trees to either side of the trail were torn by gashes indicating the portage of heavy equipment.’

RECONDO: LRRPs in the 101st Airborne

p36 ‘Burford stopped and bent over, reaching for something in the bushes. He pulled out several pieces of paper, a cigarette pack and a candy wrapper. He licked the wrapper, then turned his head my way and whispered, “Sugar. Wrapper’s still covered with sugar; if it had set out overnight, he sugar would be gone. The gooks are close.”

...Next to the stream’s edge, the moss was torn. The gooks must have gotten out of the water here and gone around. Several logs and branches lay on the south side. Harris froze and pointed at the logs. I looked and could see mud still dripping from them. Harris backed up.’

p161 ‘A tree in the ravine below appeared to have some type of markings on it. I decided to check it out. I could see that there were signs on at least two sides of the tree. They were man-made and could only be some type of signal for any NVAs in the area. We set up a circular perimeter around the tree as Roberts sketched each making in his notebook...

I soon found another tree with similar makings about four feet above the ground. Roberts stopped to record each new enemy sign. The markings were like road signs on a major highway back in the States.’

p162 ‘I stopped and...studied the object on the other side of the limb. There, just inches from my face, was the biggest wad of green snot I had ever seen. It was fresh, and it was human!...We were getting closer...

I searched for the outlines of people in the trees ahead. My uncle had taught me how to spot deer in my mind and then look for that image in the woods. Most people did it wrong. They would walk right past a deer standing in cover and never sport him. Your have to expect to see your prey.’
This chapter contains four sections:

- Maintenance
- Marksmanship
- Sounds
- Techniques

### Maintenance

#### Clear and Present Danger

p209 ‘Each pair of soldiers cleaned their weapons one at a time, then worried about food.’

#### The End of the Line

p5 ‘As the Marine fire dropped off, signal whistles sounded on the hillside. North Vietnamese...leaders maneuvered their soldiers out of the bunkers to flank and overrun isolated Marine positions. After the battle, dozens of American dead were found crouched over their rifles, killed as they tried to thread together the three separate pieces of their cleaning rods so they could ram a jammed shellcasing out of their rifles and return to the fight.’

#### Fix Bayonets! and Other Stories

p33 ‘The...officer picked up the rifle, snapped back the bolt, and squinted expertly down the bore. “Disgustin’”, he said. “Sure he was a replacement. You never catch an old-timer with a bore like that filthy! Bet there hasn’t been a rag through it in a week. You know...I was looking at some of the rifles of that bunch of machine-gunners...they were beautiful. Never saw better kept pieces. Fine soldiers in a lot of ways, these Boche!...”’

p143 ‘Troops...two companies of the 5th Regiment...had come out at dawn...A savage-looking lot, in battered helmets and dirty uniforms. But you saw them cleaning their rifles.’

#### NAM

p211 ‘I started working my gun squad...I had them breaking down and cleaning the gun blindfolded.’
RECONDO: LRRPs in the 101st Airborne

p20  ‘Byron...continued cleaning the moisture form his ammunition. He laid his boonie towel out, emptied each magazine onto it, and wiped down each round. Then one by one, he fed them back into the magazine.

He continued, “Always keep eighteen rounds in your magazines, no more. Leave out two rounds. It puts less stress on the spring and gives you more snap, less risk of a jam.”’

p96  ‘Small-arms fire erupted from the right flank. I returned fire, getting off a short burst, before my bolt locked open-a double feed...I tore at the duct tape that held my cleaning rod to the barrel.

I took the rod, jammed it down the barrel, knocking out the double feed. I dropped the old magazine and jammed home a fresh one.’

Sword Point

p45  ‘The light coat of oil that had protected their machine guns from the spring rains in the Ukraine attracted sand that jammed them in the desert. During their first serious run-in with an Iranian roadblock...Kurpov’s platoon was embarrassed when only one machine gun in the entire platoon fired...Since that time, the men...checked their weapons and kept them clean and free of oil.’

Team Yankee

p22  ‘He...reminded Harding of the 0730 platoon leaders’ meeting and the weapons inspection...at 0900...Bannon knew that by the time he returned to the platoon all weapons would have been checked for cleanliness, functioning, headspace, and timing by either Harding or the platoon sergeant or both. But it was part of the routine that had been established, and it gave him a chance to learn more about the men in the platoon and a chance for them to see him. It was important that the attached units know that their commander had high standards when it came to...weapons, positions, camouflage, and all those things that separated the quick from the dead.’

Marksmanship

“Advice for a Light Infantry Platoon Leader”

•  ‘Make sure every soldier is qualified on his weapon, his weapon is zeroed, and the zero is recorded. A good technique is to put the zero on a piece of tape and place it in the hollow of the hand grip.’

Fix Bayonets! and Other Stories

p7  ‘The 4th Brigade of Marines...had...a brush with advancing Germans, and the Germans were given a new experience: rifle-fire that begins to kill at 800 yards...’

p12  ‘The platoons...inclined...forward, like men in heavy rain...Officers yelled “Battlesight! fire at will” - and the leaders...took it up with Springfields, aimed shots.’
p13  ‘The Boche, directing his fire by observers in tree-tops, browned the slope industriously...It helped some to bag the feldwebels in the trees; there were men in that line who could hit at 750 yards, three times out of five.’

_Feldwebel_ is the German term for sergeant. _Boche_ is slang for German. - Ed.

p17  ‘The Marines were prone, slings adjusted...“It’s a quarter-point right windage-“ “Naw! not a breath of air! Use zero-“ A file of...soldiers...came trotting from the right...they cast themselves down happily. “What range buddy? - usin’ any windage-?” A hairy non-com got into his sling and laid out a little pile of clips.’

p19  ‘The Boche...could not make head against the rifles...aimed, sustained rifle fire, that comes from nowhere in particular and picks off men...the rifle and bayonet goes anywhere a man can go, and the rifle and the bayonet win battles.’

p20  “Slover-Jennings-Heald-got a rifle...? Range 350-let’em have it...”

p22  ‘Later there was a letter, taken from a dead feldwebel in the Bois de Belleau- “The Americans are savages. They kill everything that moves...”’

_The German sergeant is referring to marksmanship - Ed_

p80  ‘Advancing toward them...was a great body of Germans...They took out cartridges, and arranged them in...piles. They tested the wind with wetted fingers, and set their sights...“Range three-fifty...!”’

p133  ‘The Marines, lying prone or taking rest for their Springfields, killed them as they ran. This same rifle-fire...broke that force and dispersed it...“Battle-sight, an’ aim low...don’t let any of them bastards get away!”’

_Most of the combat narratives in Fix Bayonets! describe outstanding rifle marksmanship in combat as the hallmark of the professional Marine infantryman. Constant references to range and windage during combat indicate how well trained the WWI Marine was with his rifle. - Ed._

“MCO 3591.2J - Does It Help or Hinder the Marine Corps?”

- ‘Marines shooting abilities in World War I...proved conclusively the effectiveness of the Corp’s marksmanship instruction. Foreign officers were amazed to see Marines in the heat of battle, deliberately stop and change their sights. The Germans feared Marine riflemen more than any other fighters.’

_A Rumor of War_

p287  ‘At a range of...four hundred yards, Lonehill put a bullet at the man’s feet, adjusted the elevation knob of his rifle, and coolly fired again, the enemy soldier falling hard.’
"A Summer’s Night’s Dream: Part II - War Reminiscences"

- ‘I knocked down Hartman’s rifle because he was shooting into the sky. I put Krep’s sight right, on finding him shooting at 600 yards with his flap down at point-blank range.’

Sounds

Cooks and Bakers

p119  ‘The...weapons...fired on and off throughout the night. Each weapon had its own sound and by the end of the first week the lieutenant knew each one.’

Fields of Fire

p64  ‘Only two tubes firing. AK rifles instead of the big gun. Snake grunted knowledgeable...The gooners have skyed out. That’s just their rear.’

p205  ‘I can tell from the crack of a rifle shot the type of weapon fired and what direction the bullet is traveling. I can listen to a mortar pop and know its size, how far away it is.’

Inside the LRRPs: Rangers in Vietnam

p8  ‘We heard a...rifle shot about a half-kilometer away. It was quickly followed by another shot from about the same location. By the sounds of the rifles, I knew they were AK-47s. The enemy frequently used such shots as a means of communications so elements could link up. A short time later we could hear the dinks noisily moving down the trail toward us...’

Marine at War

p60  ‘It was easy to tell their weapons from ours. Their rifles had a lighter sound and a higher crack. Their machine guns fired faster than our. Their artillery was more wobbly in flight than ours.’

NAM

p124  ‘All the catalogue of noises. Picking out an RPG sound. Our mortars or their mortars. AKs as opposed to M-16s. All those noises that I know that at ninety I would be able to recognize and differentiate. I still look up every time I hear a Huey.’

A Rumor of War

p229  ‘One of the Popular Force militiamen fired a burst from his carbine. “Goddamn PFs shooting at shadows again,” Coffell said. “Shadows don’t carry automatic rifles. That sounded like an AK to me.”’
Team Yankee

145 ‘The familiar pop pop of the M16 firing was answered by rifle reports that were not familiar...Probably Soviet AKs. It was the high-pitched whine of two personnel carriers approaching that finally got him to move.’

Techniques

Chickenhawk

p158 ‘As we loaded...a grunt got on board carrying an M-79 grenade launcher. He slammed the butt of the weapon on my cargo deck and the thing went off. The grenade went up through the roof of my Huey, up through the spinning rotor blades. After several seconds, it fell back down through the blades and landed next to the ship five feet from my door. It didn’t go off...from that moment on I had all M-79s checked for safeties on before I would allow them to board.’

Unit SOPs should dictate weapons conditions during helicopter and truck movement. - Ed.

Clear and Present Danger

p121 ‘He didn’t need full automatic fire. Anything more than three rounds just wasted ammunition...as a light infantryman he understood that ammunition was something that had to be carried.’

p339 ‘The sling...was double-looped so that he could carry it slung over his head, always in firing position. There was electrician’s tape over the muzzle to keep it from being clogged, and more tape was wrapped around the sling swivels to minimize noise.’

p612 ‘Tracers from the riflemen meant something else. The last three rounds in every magazine were lit to tell them that it was time to load new magazines.’

p615 ‘“Move out, move out now!”...Those soldiers who had them tossed smoke and CS tear-gas grenades to conceal their departure, but the sparkling of the pyrotechnics merely gave the other side a point of aim, and each drew the fire from a dozen weapons...another two wounded as a direct result of doing what they’d been taught to do.’

Fields of Fire

p93 ‘The cemetery erupted as tracers reached toward Nam An...Rounds poured furiously for a few quick seconds, then there was a moment of silence: in their excitement, all had emptied the first magazine of ammo at the same time.’

p98 ‘The patrol had fired on full automatic, and all firing stopped as the squad changed magazines in unison.’

24-5
Fighting on Guadalcanal

p8 ‘The men in my squad fire low at the base of the trees. There is too much high firing going on.’

p19 ‘Discontinue the use of tracers for night firing. They give away your position. Both our riflemen and machine gunners must be taught to shoot low.’

p37 ‘When we cease firing, they cease firing. When we fire, they open up. They do this to conceal their positions.’

Force Recon Diary, 1969

p105 ‘Kilcrease...suddenly pushed me down...sighted in, and opened up with his M-16, firing a full magazine of tracers at six kneeling NVA...Kilcrease yelled, “Contact left, six gooks, one hundred yards...”’

*The leader’s first magazine is all tracer to mark the target for his unit.* - Ed.

p207 ‘I shot him...my first magazine is full of tracer rounds.’

p221 ‘Keaveney...had two canvas pouches, originally designed to protect plasma bottles, as carrying cases for his 40-millimeter grenades.’

Inside the LRRPs: Rangers in Vietnam

p123 ‘Capable of firing its twenty-round magazine (usually loaded with only eighteen rounds to reduce spring pressure and resultant jams) on semiautomatic...the M-16 was light and small enough for recon operations.’

Marine at War

p11 ‘Buck pushed the muzzle of a BAR...away from his face...“Will you keep that thing out of my eyes?”

“Stand it up between your knees,” Buck told the automatic rifleman. “I don’t want to get my head blown off by some boot.”’

p46 ‘Buck began to fire, squeezing his bursts off in patterns of fours and fives, the way a good BAR man should...Off to the right a new man poured out a long, barrel-burning burst on his BAR. “Miserable boot,” Buck said. “He’ll be shooting around corners with that thing by the time he sees a Jap.” He turned toward me: “Pick and fire, boy...”’

p132 ‘Buck kept watch. When he waved his hand...we raised all five of our rifles...

“...Steady fire now.”

...Buck...dropped his raised arm. We cut loose with all the weapons we had.’
“Military Operations on Urban Terrain”

- ‘Only key leaders fire tracers. The other soldiers then fire where their leaders have directed them. Another technique, particularly useful at night, is to prohibit the use of automatic fires until they are directed; the soldiers can then assume that all other automatic fires are coming from the enemy. Ground-burst illumination on the objective can also help control fires.’

NAM

p69 ‘I had learned to fire in bursts of only three...so the enemy...couldn’t tell who had the M-60. They would gear their fire on me otherwise...My assistant gunner...made me practice to respond to his voice commands. All he had to do was find my targets...He was just hollering commands. “Ammo up!” The first squad had to do whatever they had to do to get a couple of hundred rounds to me.’

“One Place, Three Wars: Part 1”

- ‘Never carry two weapons with different ammunition.’

“Pet Peeves Re Uniforms”

- ‘I would also like to take issue with these...Marines who think it’s cool to look like Pancho Villa with their machinegun belts crossed across their chest...It is not a matter of aesthetics; we learned the hard way in Vietnam that the first time the gunner hits the deck his ammunition became fouled with earth or other debris causing jams in the M60 machinegun. Also, after 2 or 3 days in the Vietnamese climate, the ammo became corroded causing further problems in firing the guns. I have no doubt that desert sand causes the same types of problems.’

RECONDO: LRRPs in the 101st Airborne

p49 ‘I was assigned to carry the M-60...I rigged a shoulder strap for the gun so that it would balance under my arm. Meszaros was my loader. He had to carry his own M-16 plus five hundred additional rounds of M-60 ammo.

Each of us had a hundred-round belt of ammo at the top of our rucksacks. That way, whoever was near the guy carrying the machine gun would be able to reach into the pack of the LRP in front of him and pull out a belt to feed into the M-60.’

p160 ‘The fourth man back was carrying the M-79 grenade launcher and was trying to push through the overhanging wait-a-minute vines, when a vine caught on the trigger of his M-79. I heard the soft tooop as the weapon fired.

Two or three seconds elapsed before the round impacted ...The echo of the explosion seemed to last forever.’

p164 ‘Roberts burst on the scene...firing the M-79 grenade launcher...One of his round impacted twenty meters to my front. The next round hit a tree ten feet away and bounced back over our heads. When the round hit, it had not traveled the necessary distance required to arm it. So it didn’t explode.’

24-7
Team Yankee

p40  ‘Two...aircraft, came screaming toward the...valley from the east...Bannon hoped the Team would abide by the...SOP, and not engage them. With only machine guns, they stood little chance of hitting fast-moving jets. The only thing...accomplished by firing would be to give away the Team’s positions.’