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# U.S. ARMY SPECIAL FORCES (a.k.a. GREEN BERETS)

Green Berets may laugh when you mention Rambo, but Stallone's superhuman psycho wasn't so far-fetched.

In 1952, anticipating an inevitable confrontation with the Red Army, Fort Bragg created the first Psychological Warfare/Special Forces center in North Carolina. America's most intense—and least compromising—commandos have been kicking ass around the globe ever since.

## Selection and Training

Only army specialists with a sergeant's rank or higher and airborne certification need apply for the Q-Course at Fort Bragg. The Assessment & Selection Phase lasts three miserable weeks. A typical daily itinerary: marching a minimum of 17 miles, tackling a 1.5-mile-long obstacle course that emphasizes vertical obstructions, and drifting with full gear in a pool for hours on end. At the end of the program, recruits must complete the dreaded Star—a 11.2-mile nighttime land navigation course through murderous terrain. An assessment board then decides who continues.

Phase Two is where recruits are separated into specialist courses, which vary in length. Weapons specialists, for example, train for 24 weeks. By the end of the course, they know how to make a rocket launcher with (believe it or not) just two pieces of wood and a battery. One of the instructors' favorite exercises is the Pile Test, in which five weapons are completely disassembled and thrown randomly into a heap. The trainee must put all the weapons back in working order within 30 minutes. And yes, neatness counts.

By Phase Three surviving recruits combine their individual skills with all the other recruits in what's called the Robin Sage exercise. Detachments of these soldiers parachute at night into North Carolina's Uwharrie National Forest in a mythical scenario complete with a specific objective—and hostile natives. Those who are successful are at last qualified to wear the famed green beret (a once contraband item formally endorsed by President Kennedy in 1961).

## Unit Highlights

During the Gulf War, even before the air raids began, Special Forces carried out deep reconnaissance and surveillance, prisoner snatches, combat search and rescue, target desig-



## THE BARRETT .50 CALIBER SNIPER RIFLE

Green Berets can take out an individual enemy target more than a kilometer away with this high-tech weapon.

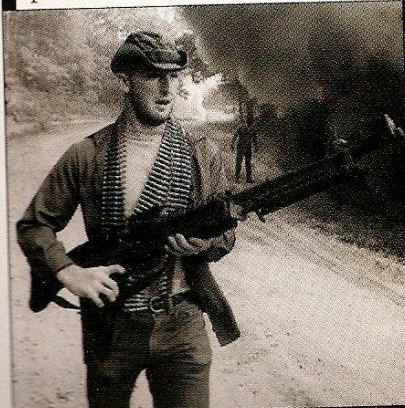
nation, general intelligence-gathering missions, and raids. They were able to get through occupied Kuwait all the way to Baghdad, tracking down SCUDs.

## Personal Combat Story

"I was on commission in Sierra Leone working with the government when, after one particularly wearying battle with the rebels, a general evacuation was called.

"When we arrived at the designated Medevac site, we found 90 frightened, *healthy* rebels who wanted to defect back to our side waiting in our chopper. However, the thing could only haul 60 personnel—we were extremely low on fuel and night was falling. It was critical that we be wheels-up within a minute, but our excess 'baggage' wouldn't un-ass the chopper. It was a tense situation. Most of these guys were heavily armed. The one nearest me laughed when I asked some of them to get off the aircraft. So he seemed the natural choice to grab by the shirt and toss out the door. He landed flat on his face. He staggered to his feet, and spitting blood, drew down on me with his rifle. I leaped out and booted him in the chest before he could shoot, but then found myself encircled by 30 of his buddies—all pissed off.

"Their commander stepped forward and said he was going to execute me. Wouldn't have been the first time I'd been threatened like that, but I could hear all their weapons being turned off 'safe.' Thinking quickly, I told them that if we hurried I could get the first load out and come right back for them. He agreed. Moments later we bugged out...and never returned."—Lieutenant. A.G. Hawke, 35, 10-year Special Forces veteran



A modern-day cowboy lookin' for a fight

They kind of give new meaning to the term "dead wood"

