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Eyes on the Ground

Captain Bobbi Davidson scanned the horizon from end to end, her green eyes hidden behind the visor of her helmet which magnified the little light available in the middle of the moonless night sky. So far, the sophisticated sensors and light amplifiers found nothing she hadn't already expected to see. Ghostly green outlines supplied by the helmet's computer enhanced the profile of the surrounding terrain; red brackets appeared around potential targets, which were all too far away to activate threat sensors; the numbers and letters in the bottom corner of the display told her that everything was as it should be.

She turned around and gave the thumbs up to the Pave Invader crew waiting in the ship behind her. They acknowledged with a wave, and the eight members of Davidson's Recon Team crouched down in a wide circle around the runabout-looking MS-14 as it silently pushed up and away from the desert sand. Hopefully the antigravs didn't attract too much attention. Antigravs—the energy-hogging alternative to a rolling landing—gave the advantage to the team of a pinpoint, fast, and audibly silent insertion. But antigravs gave off a distinctive and 'loud' sensor signature that bled more energy than the MS-14's dampened warp core.

Too late to worry about it now. Her threat sensors would notify her shortly if any unexpected scanners were suddenly pointed her way. Without a word, she raised her hand above her head, described a small circle in the air, and pointed in the direction of their intended destination. The team assembled in their rehearsed formation, and set off at a steady but rapid walk.

They were late, and that was going to be a problem. Special Operations, known in the vernacular as SpecOps, are often timed to the very second, and delays can result not only in failure but death. Davidson and her team should have landed nearly 45 minutes ago, but their departure had been delayed by Theatre Command, for reasons to which she was not privy.

No matter, they could make up the time on the walk in. Her team were in the finest shape of their lives and could, under normal circumstances, have run the distance in nearly Federation-record time. However, these were hardly normal circumstances. While their Landing Zone had been a fairly remote area, every step they took toward their objective brought them closer to a town of nearly 500 civilians... who all belonged to the wrong side. They had to travel relatively slowly, taking care not to call too much attention to themselves. The 200 kilogram packs on their backs weren't helping either. Some of her team were carrying nearly their own body weight. The extra weight would be necessary to sustain them over the next several days. They

were already deep in enemy territory, and—if things did not go for the Allies as planned—they could expect to be there for a week or more before being extracted.

Their mission was relatively simple, but it could also be crucial to the ultimate success of the Allied advance. The ground war would start in just under eight hours, and Davidson's team was one of two dozen being inserted far behind enemy lines to provide the Allies with much-needed intelligence on the state, direction, and strength of enemy reinforcements to the front. Davidson had been briefed on the mission along with 23 other team leaders nearly three weeks ago, and had spent almost every hour since then rehearsing with her team in the seclusion of their forward base.

She had seen the Allied strategy before—she had learned it at Starfleet Marine Corps Academy. It had been used to great effect by the Americans of Old Earth during a conflict known as the Persian Gulf War. The idea then had been as it was now: a frontal assault by a large ground force would be conducted simultaneously with a pincer movent of a secondary force which would cut in from the side and behind the dug-in enemy frontline. This would surround the enemy and cut them off from their supply and reinforcement lines. However, the attack strategy would leave the flanking assault force vulnerable to counterattack from the enemy rear. In the 20th century, that counterattack never materialized, but here in the 24th century no one was assuming the Kadatians would react the same as the Iraqis.

The Starfleet, Starfleet Marine, and Radatian allied forces would need to know the second Kadation reinforcements started toward the flanking force if they were to successfully complete the enveloping maneuver and react to the counterattack. And although there were satellites and starships in orbit, they were no substitute for eyes on the ground. Davidson and her counterparts would dig holes, construct hides over and around them, observe enemy traffic, and report via digital burst antenna (DBA) to Theatre Command. If everything went well, Allied forces would reach the SpecOps positions in a day or two. If things went badly, well, nobody wanted to think about that.

Davidson was feeling better now. She and her team had more than made up the time on their walk in. They had reached their initial rallying point an hour ahead of schedule. There they had dug a hole in which to hide an emergency supply of equipment and weapons. Into this they put the backup DBA, some spare charge-packs for their phaser rifles, and the team's backup heavy phaser. They would have preferred projectile weapons—every Special Operator does because they do not give away your firing

position as a phaser does—but any Kadatian soldiers they'd run into would be too heavily armored for light projectile weapons. Besides, if they had to start shooting, it would mean their location had been compromised anyway.

At the rally point, the team split up into two teams of four. They would dig their hides on opposite sides of the hover corridor and about three kilometers apart. The corridor was a wide, flat road that served wheeled vehicles at surface level and antigrav hovercraft and ground-effect vehicles a few meters above. Each team would be in a good position to observe the road and the corridor, and by separating they would serve as backups to each other. If one team was compromised, the other could continue the mission.

In rehearsals, the teams had gotten the hide construction portion of the mission down to a respectable five hours. Of course, powered digging equipment and replicators would have done the job in minutes, but they couldn't afford the chance that the energy emissions would be detected. There weren't *supposed* to be any Kadation military forces in or near the small town of Raadash. But operators knew better than to accept Starfleet Intelligence estimates blindly. It wasn't SI's fault—it was much the same in *any* war with *any* armed force. Forward area intelligence was simply hard to collect and interpret, and it was often disturbingly inaccurate.

And so it was in this case as well.

Davidson was back to worrying. Her team had dug in and settled down under cover of night with an hour to spare before daybreak. But now that the distant twin suns rose over the flat horizon, she saw that SI had been egregiously optimistic in their assessment of the area.

The small town was full of farmers—mostly water farms. They harvested water from the atmosphere with large tracts of moisture collectors. This was the planet's driest season, with little to no moisture available for harvest, so SI had assumed that like many Federation water farmers, the Kadation farmers would not bother tending to their fields in the off season. They said the teams could expect peace and quiet out in the fields.

But now Davidson's position was surrounded on all sides by civilians. Children played with small mammal-looking animals which reminded Bobbi of dogs. Men and women (it was hard to tell the difference with the Kadations, but she assumed there were a smattering of both) tended livestock which grazed on the scattered low scrub brush available. It was practically a town meeting.

The team was well-hidden behind special holographic generators which produced a very minimal energy signature. The 'holoflage' should keep them from being detected even at a range of a meter or two, Davidson knew. But she also knew that the potential for something going wrong was increasing exponentially as the unaware civilians grew closer and closer.

Then the unthinkable happened. A toy two children had been playing with (some kind of ball?) flew straight into Davidson's hide. The hologram gave a visual cover to the team, but it couldn't bounce the ball back like the rock it pretended to be. The children were understandably surprised and moved to investigate.

Davidson didn't hesitate. She tapped the comm switch on her helmet that linked her to the DBA in her hide.

"Shanghai, this is Falcon One. We may be compromised, stand by for emergency extraction."

"Falcon One, be advised emergency extraction not possible your position in daylight."

Davidson knew that was coming. The Pave Invader could sneak past just about every sensor system known to man, but it couldn't beat eyeballs and their video equivalents. Operating this far behind enemy lines in broad daylight would likely sentence the MS-14's crew to death.

The children were nearly at the hide. Davidson and the other three members of her team tensed. They held their phaser rifles to their chests, fingers on the triggers. No one made a sound... they hardly breathed.

The children would be at the hide in less than a minute. They would surely discover the team. Although it was certainly within the team's operational parameters to kill the children and drag them into the hole, no one was about to do it. All four of them had children of their own. They also knew it would only delay the inevitable: someone would surely come looking for the children.

Then one of Davidson's team had an epiphany. Without a word Nedar, her Bajoran datawarfare specialist, knelt down to the holoflage generator and began furiously reprogramming it. The light came on for the rest of the team shortly thereafter. Davidson grabbed the ball and set it on the ledge of their hide as her weapons sergeant, Sseek (a wiry little Andorian), grabbed a small rock at the bottom of the hole. Offering it for inspection to his leader, Davidson recognized his intent and gave him a nod. He tapped Nedar on the shoulder and showed it to him as well. Nedar held up a finger, *wait*.

The children were less than two meters from them know. Nedar nodded, and Sseek threw the rock off to the side out of the hole. The children missed the rock's exit, but they did hear it strike the ground a few meters away. When they turned to look at the source of the sound, Nedar hit the enable on the generator. In less than the blink of an eye, the rock formation moved eight inches back. And there, between two simulated stones, was the ball.

At the same time the hologram moved, it also hardened. Nedar had boosted the energy output to form a solid hologram. It would bleed energy for at least a kilometer, but right now they had more immediate considerations than sensor signature. The children picked up the ball with a puzzled look, rapped on the rocks, performed something reminiscent of a human shrug, and wandered back off to play.

Davidson and her team had no more close calls that day or the next. By sunset of the second day, allied forces reached their position and they were extracted via normal channels. Most of the other teams fared as well, although some were compromised and required emergency pickup. But none of the SpecOps team members were killed or injured in the operation.

It wasn't a mission that would earn the operators a lot of glory—most SpecOps missions aren't. There were no spectacular firefights, no lightning raids or ambushes, no skin-of-the-teeth escapes (at least not for most of the teams anyway). But the forward intelligence supplied by the teams enabled the Allies to staunch the counterattack before it gained momentum and led to the success Theatre Command needed so badly.

And so it is with much of SpecOps. No one but Davidson and her compatriots would ever know of their mission. They won no medals, fought no major battles—in fact in Bobbi's case, they hadn't even fired a shot in anger. But the unconventional warriors had been the key to victory. They would celebrate in their own way, and reward themselves with the cliché but all-important knowledge of a job well done.

Part 1 - Introduction

NOTE: Students taking this branch familiarization course should first complete SFMCA-IN-10 (Basic Infantry Course) and SFMCA-IN-20 (Advanced Infantry Course) before attempting this course. Much of the doctrine and equipment of the SpecOps Branch is taken from the Infantry Guidebook, so students should be familiar with that manual prior to attempting this one.

Welcome Aboard!

Welcome to the Special Operations (SpecOps) Branch Guidebook of the STARFLEET Marine Corps (SFMC). This publication is intended primarily for members of the SFMC, which is a component of STARFLEET, The International Star Trek Fan Association, Inc. (SFI). However, anyone with an interest in our part of the Star Trek universe is invited to look and learn.

This manual was created for members of the SFMC, their friends, and anyone else with an interest in the SpecOps concept of Star Trek as it is applied by the SFMC. It is intended to serve as a handy reference work for members of the SpecOps branch. It covers the equipment, tactics, missions, and organization of the SFMC SpecOps forces. In short, it is a one-book source for the new SpecOps member wherein they can get the information they need to know to role play as a member of the SpecOps branch.

The majority of this work is obviously fictional in nature, but the references to uniforms and insignia of the SFMC are accurate. It is intended to provide a source of "background material" for members of the SFMC SpecOps branch, and/or anyone interested in the concept of SpecOps in the 24th century. It is not intended to be the last word on the subject, however, as branch material is constantly being revised, upgraded and updated by the members of the branch themselves.

Copyright and Disclaimer

Pronoun Disclaimer

The use of he/his/him, etc., and in particular the term "man" as in "crewman", are used for convenience as the standard English language conventions of unknown-gender pronouns. Not very politically correct, perhaps, but grammatical... and a lot less awkward than "crewpersons". The point is, we don't mean anything by it. Women in the service are just fine with us.

Dedication

"To commandos throughout the world who serve their countries in shadow and secrecy with only their own satisfaction for their reward."

Acknowledgments

This manual would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of Marc Harris, Michael Davis, and the countless others who lent their suggestions and support. Much of what you see in this book was directly from or based on Marc's writings, and Michael supplied valuable historical information. Many others supplied ideas and tidbits that found their way, in various forms, to these pages. Also, my thanks to the authors of several helpful web pages...just type in "Special Forces" in WebCrawler one day, and have a good surf! Thanks to all of you.

Reporting Authority

The governing authority for SpecOps information is the COTRACOM. Send questions, comments, or suggestions concerning SpecOps to:

Kevin McNulty
3820 McFarlane Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32303 email: cotracom@aol.com

Questions relating to the development and material for other branches of the SFMC should be sent to the same address.

Part 2 - History & Traditions

History of Special Operations

Special Operations is a wide-ranging field which includes several different types of military and humanitarian operations. Even in the modern-day SFMC, SpecOps encompasses no less than eight disciplines in its organizational structure. To tell the history of all these various types of special units requires a separate course of study, and is certainly not the purview of this guidebook. However, some background on the concept of SpecOps can be useful , so a simple case study of the development of special forces on Earth shall serve as our example.

Rogers' Rangers

Before modern Marine HEAT teams were rescuing hostages on hostile planets, before Colonial Marine Pararescue units snatched downed pilots from the grasp of the Romulans, even before Terran Green Berets were teaching counterinsurgency to the South Vietnamese, there were grim-faced men stalking the enemy in woods and swamps during Earth's French and Indian War. Known as Rogers' Rangers after their commander Major Robert Rogers, they were the first of America's unconventional forces. Rogers' Rangers fought in terrain that normal men shunned. They crept up on an enemy with stealth, shunning the 'rules' of what was then modern warfare. "Move fast and hit hard," Rogers told his men, and they obeyed, thereby setting the standard for generations to follow.

The Swamp Fox

The tradition continued during the American Revolution with Francis Marion, known as "The Swamp Fox," who led daring guerrilla raids on British forces in South Carolina and Georgia. His troops harassed the enemy with a success out of all proportion to their small numbers because Marion used the element of surprise to its greatest potential. This established the "economy of force" that would be the purview of Special Ops for centuries.

The Gray Ghost

In the Civil War, Colonel John Singleton Mosby of Virginia formed a band of Confederate raiders that became the terror of Union generals. Operating

from the outskirts of his enemy's capital, Mosby and 300 select volunteers cut off communications and supplies, wrecked railroads, and raided headquarters behind enemy lines. Because of his stealth and uncanny ability to avoid capture, Mosby came to be known as the Gray Ghost. Well-trained and well-disciplined, Mosby and his men set a model for guerrilla warfare: weaken the enemy's front line, weaken the enemy's infrastructure, and win the support of the people.

SpecOps Comes Into Its Own

Although many small, purpose-formed units, like those above, existed throughout Earth's history in many countries, it was not until World War II that special operations troops finally left their unstoried peripheries and came into their own. In quick succession the public soon would come to know the names of such units as the Devil's Brigade, Darby's Rangers, Merrill's Marauders and the Alamo Scouts.

Known more formally as the 1st Special Service Force, the Devil's Brigade was a joint Canadian-American venture that began July 9, 1942. Airborne-qualified and rigorously trained, its forte was close-quarter combat against numerically-superior forces.

Darby's Rangers was the moniker given to the 1st Ranger Battalion in honor of its commander, Major William 0. Darby. The unit was activated June 19, 1942, and fought throughout Western Europe. It achieved its greatest fame when it scaled the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc as part of the D-Day invasion.

Merrill's Marauders was the title given to Colonel Frank D. Merrill's 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), a 3,000-man force that staked out a piece of Burmese jungle and held it from the Japanese in five major battles and 17 skirmishes. The Marauders' greatest feat was their march of miles through thick Burmese foliage en route to the capture of an airfield at Myitkyina.

In the Pacific, Lieutenant General Walter Krueger established a small elite force and called them the Alamo Scouts. The Scouts led U.S. Rangers and Filipino guerrillas in an attack on a Japanese prison camp at Cabantuan, freeing all 511 allied prisoners there. Never numbering more than 70 volunteers, the Alamo Scouts earned 44 Silver Stars, 33 Bronze Stars and four Soldier's Medals by the end of the war. In nearly 80 hazardous missions, they never lost a man in action.

Besides these organized special operations efforts, a number of U.S. Army officers conducted guerrilla operations behind Japanese lines in the Philippines. Colonel Russell Volckman, who later would play an important role in

the birth of the US Army's Special Forces, escaped from the enemy and formed a Filipino guerrilla band in northern Luzon, which by 1945 consisted of five regiments. Major Windell Fertig, a reservist, raised his own guerrilla force that ultimately totaled some 20,000 fighters.

WWII: The Crucible

Meanwhile, the US Army was not the only military learning the value of Special Forces. Most of Earth's elite fighting units can trace at least some of their ancestry back to the early 1940s. The US Navy's SEAL (SEa Air & Land) forces, a formidable commando force by the turn of the century, traced their ancestry back to volunteer construction brigades in 1943 which developed special tactics for removing enemy obstacles form amphibious landing zones in advance of friendly forces.

Also born in the era of the newly developed airborne infantry was Britain's SAS (Special Air Service) which would go on to be one of the world's most elite counterterrorism units by the turn of the century. During WWII or in the years immediately following, nearly all the world's major armies developed some type of unconventional warfare unit.

The OSS

Also during World War II, in areas that even the Devil's Brigade and Darby's Rangers never ventured, there was a completely different type of war going on. Small parachuting units operated behind enemy lines, developing a network of contacts, giving instructions to local fighters, and waging guerrilla warfare. It was a new kind of special operations, taking a bit of the Swamp Fox and a bit of Mosby, and combining it with new techniques of airborne and guerrilla fighting. There wasn't a name for it yet, but the agency that developed it was called the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).

The primary operation of the OSS in Europe was called the Jedburgh mission. It consisted of dropping three-man teams into France, Belgium and Holland, where they trained partisan resistance movements and conducted guerrilla operations against the Germans in preparation for the D-Day invasion. Other OSS operations took place in Asia, most spectacularly in Burma, where OSS Detachment 101 organized 11,000 Kachin tribesmen into a force that eventually killed 10,000 Japanese at a loss of only 206 of its own.

After the war the OSS was disbanded, but from its intelligence operations came the nucleus of men and techniques that would give birth to the Central Intelligence Agency on September 18, 1947. (Indeed, the first directors of the CIA were veterans of the OSS.) From its guerrilla operations came

the nucleus of men and techniques that would give birth to the Special Forces (Green Berets) in June 1952.

The Green Berets

Colonel Aaron Bank and Colonel Russell Volckmann, two OSS operatives who remained in the military after the war, worked tirelessly to convince the Army to adopt its own unconventional guerrilla-style force. Special operations as envisioned by the two men, and by Bank in particular, were a force multiplier: a small number of soldiers who could sow a disproportionately large amount of trouble for the enemy. Confusion would reign among enemy ranks, and objectives would be accomplished with an extreme economy of manpower. It was a bold idea, one that went against the grain of traditional concepts, but by 1952 the Army was finally ready to embark on a new era of unconventional warfare.

In the late 20th Century, US Army Special Forces ran several important operations during what was known as the Persian Gulf War—proving the value of SpecOps in "modern" warfare.

The new organization was dubbed Special Forces, a designation derived from the OSS, whose operational teams in the field were given the same name in 1944. From a humble beginning, the Special Forces quickly grew into a formidable but elite force of men trained not only in direct action, but also in humanitarian missions and in teaching an indigenous population how and why to fight against a common enemy. These unconventional warfare skills became the hallmark of the Green Berets, so known for their distinctive headgear, who played critical roles in the US's major conflicts throughout the latter 20th and early 21st centuries.

SpecOps Saves a Country

Following the Eugenics Wars and another world war against China, the United States was battered and depleted of resources—including money. The US military was regrouped under ever-tightening budgetary restrictions until it was a miniature copy of its former self. It was during this time that SpecOps played its most important role.

Periodic low-intensity conflicts required an American military presence in a time when America hardly had a military. If not for the small, elite SpecOps forces fielded by the US's Special Operations Command, the Americans may have lost more than they would have dreamed. The US Army Special Forces raised indigenous armies in South America which kept growing dictatorships from gaining enough power to challenge southern borders.

US Navy SEAL Teams infiltrated enemy staging bases and twice disrupted and ultimately thwarted attempts to invade the Hawaiian Islands in Earth's 21st century.

US Navy SEAL Teams sabotaged two attempts by Southeast Asian Coalition forces to invade Hawaii after the US withdrew most of its fleet there. And USMC Special Operations Capable units prevented a war in the Arab States with daring preemptive strikes.

The Colonial Marines

When the MegaCorporations began colonizing other planets, they needed trained fighters to protect and police their colonists. Thus, the Colonial Marines were born. Formed on a model of several of Earth's ground forces (most notably the United States' Army and Marine Corps), the Colonial Marines formed the first truly spaceborne ground forces.

Many former Green Berets, SEALs, and even SAS,Russian Spetznatz and French DGSE members were tapped to form the new SpecOps arm of the Colonial Marines. It was this initial blueprint for a multi-tasked, combined force SpecOps arm that formed the basis of what the SFMC SpecOps Branch is today. Colonial Marine SpecOps forces were especially helpful in their antiterrorist, hostage rescue, and raiding capacities against the pirates and marauders that plagued the early colonies.

The UNPF Marines

Under relentless attacks and a steady advance by the Romulans in the late 2150s, the United Nations of Earth nationalized all armed forces in 2158 to

create the United Nations Peace Force. This nationalization included the Colonial Marines, since they had become the de facto experts in spaceborne warfare. Bowing to their experience and expertise, the UN and member nations quickly gathered their elite fighting units together under the Colonial Marines' SpecOps organization.

Together under the UNPF Marine Corps' Special Operations Branch, these elite troops became the bane of the Romulan advance. Penetrating deep into enemy-held systems, SpecOps forces disrupted Romulan supply lines and communications, cutting off entire star systems from their supplies and reinforcements prior to UNPF attacks. Combat Control teams guided UNPF Aerospace forces to sensitive targets during planetary invasions. And advanced Recon Teams provided critical information on Romulan troop and ship movements from hidden listening posts far beyond the front lines. In fact, it was three of these teams which served as forward air controllers for the Battle of Cheron, directing UNPFMC aerospace forces to their crucial targets—ultimately sacrificing themselves to accomplish the final defeat of the Romulans.

Starfleet and the SFMC

In response to the Romulan Invasion, five separate civilizations joined together to form the United Federation of Planets. The UFP was created as a peaceful and cooperative organization of defense and exploration. However, no one had forgotten the lessons they had learned at the hands of the Romulans. A strong naval force, STARFLEET, was created; and to take the battle to the ground, the SFMC was an integral part of that new defense force. One of the SFMC's service branches was, naturally, Special Operations. After its key successes during the Romulan War, no one doubted the need or effectiveness of unconventional warfare.

However, a long period bereft of war and full of pirate and terrorist activity changed the SpecOps branch. The emphasis now was much more on counterterrorism, hostage rescue, and smuggling interdiction: all roles taken on by STARFLEET in space, with only limited help from SFMC SpecOps on the ground. The SpecOps branch atrophied during this time as the lessons of history slowly faded from memory. For this, the Federation would pay a terrible price.

The Klingon War

The war with the Klingon Empire nearly cost the Federation everything. Had peace not been imposed by the Organians, the chances of the UFP reigning victorious were questionable at best. In the years that followed the

war, lengthy analysis determined that some of the reasons for the large and (in many cases) unnecessary loss of manpower and equipment early on were: 1) A lack of prewar military intelligence on the form and disposition of the Klingon military, 2) inability of STARFLEET to conduct forward-area reconnaissance, 3) inability to conduct precision specialized strikes on a small scale, and 4) total lack of ability to equip and train local populations of embattled areas to survive and resist enemy insurgence. In other words, a failure to field an adequate SpecOps force.

These findings led to wholesale reorganization of special forces within STARFLEET and the SFMC. STARFLEET relinquished almost all of its special operations roles, save for smuggling interdiction, and the SFMC SpecOps branch renewed its commitment to the Colonial Marine multi-discipline, unified-force organizational blueprint. Never again did SpecOps waiver, and their renewed commitment was validated during the Cardassian War where SpecOps involvement was on a par with that of the UNPFMC SpecOps Branch during the Romulan War.

SpecOps Traditions

Like other SFMC service branches, the SpecOps Branch has its own various traditions that make the branch 'belong' to its members. Things that are uniquely theirs. Some of the more common are listed below.

By any Other Name

Marines in the SpecOps branch are called "special operators". While they may have other informal names for each other (i.e.- within the community, HEAT team members are known as "Heaters"), anyone from outside the branch should refer to them as operators (or, of course, Marines).

The Coin Check

This custom dates back to late 20th century Earth when US Army Special Forces carried specially minted coins from their unit. Today, the "coin" is a specially-replicated tripolymer chit, but the principle is the same. When entering into a drinking establishment with other SpecOps members, one will produce his coin and slam it on the bar or table. All other SpecOps members follow suit to demonstrate their esprit. Operators caught without their coin must buy the round as penance.

Hell Week

This is the tradition SpecOps Marines enjoy least and are proudest of: Week 8 of BASS (BAsic Specops School), officially known as Motivation Week. At least a quarter of any given BASS class drops out during this stage of training. It is a gruelling, punishing, sleep-depriving week of incredibly intense training. However, those that make it through know with complete confidence that they have what it takes to be SpecOps...and that if they don't quit Hell Week, they won't quit anything.

Bar Burning

One of the most somber of SpecOps traditions is the rite performed by team members when they lose one of their own. Should a special operator die in the line of duty, his teammates will convene at a local drinking establishment to pour rum over the bar and set it alight in commemoration.

The British Special Air Service of Old Earth was one of the most elite of the early special forces. Its insignia, above, inspired the current Branch motto and helped inspire the Branch device.

The SpecOps Motto "Who Dares Wins"

Originally from the British SAS of Old Earth, the motto succinctly summarizes the SpecOps philosophy of operations.

The SpecOps Slogan "Seven Years for Seven Minutes!"

That's exactly what the training for SpecOps feels like to those in the Branch. Training for seven years so that you can perform flawlessly for seven minutes: and in so doing free a hostage, cripple an enemy, or free a populace—and live to fight another day.

The SpecOps Device "Crossed Knives"

The knife has been a symbol of special operations work since the earliest days. A knife appeared in the insignia of the US Army's Special Forces, the British Army's SAS, the Andorian Aylacy (AY-lah-CEE), the Kappellan T'edar (TAY-ee-dar)...the list goes on and on. It a symbol of a swift, silent, and deadly weapon—which is exactly what a SpecOps Marine is.

The SpecOps Creed

The SpecOps creed was written by Field Marshal Charles Dotambwe, the first commander of the Colonial Marine Corps' SpecOps Branch. It is based on a conglomeration of several older creeds, and it reads:

> *I am a Marine trained in the Special Operational forces of my government's military forces. As such, I recognize that I am a testament to those who served before me. I shall never dishonor their memory, I shall always strive for the standards set by them.*

I have been entrusted with the confidence and honor of the Federation, and I will not fail in my efforts. Surrender is not in my vocabulary. Faithful is my watchword, and never shall I allow the Federation to waiver, on the battlefield or off.

Recognizing that I am a volunteer, fully knowing the hazards of my chosen profession, I will always endeavor to uphold the prestige, honor, and high "esprit de corps" of my unit.

Acknowledging the fact that an operator is a more elite soldier who arrives at the cutting edge of battle by space, land, sea, or air, I accept the fact that the Federation expects me to move further, faster and fight harder than any other soldier. Gallantly will I show the world that I'm a specially selected and well trained soldier. My courtesy to superior officers, neatness of dress and care of equipment shall set the example for others to follow.

I recognize that I have been instructed in methods not common to others of my profession, and may be called upon to use them in times of public need. I have been bestowed with a special trust, this I will never forget. I will be strong in mind and body always. Never, shall I allow my fellows to fall into the hands of the enemy, no matter the cost.

Energetically will I meet the enemies of the Federation. I shall defeat them on the field of battle for I am better trained and will fight with all my might. I know that I act for the good of my government and its citizens, and never shall I question my own integrity. No price is too great for the freedom of the Federation. If necessary, I will pay that price to accomplish my mission, though I be the lone survivor.

Part 3 - Organization

The basic operational unit of the SpecOps Branch is the team. Teams have varying composition and mission types as discussed below, but all team members have the same basic SpecOps training which includes extensive training in a variety of environments and infiltration tactics. This is one of the things which makes SpecOps "special".

Additionally, all operators are required to have at least three years exemplary service in the Corps before applying for SpecOps training. This means that there is almost never an enlisted operator in the Branch below the rank of sergeant, nor officer below the rank of captain.

MOS Listings for SpecOps

801 SpecOps Commander

This MOS is reserved for senior officers who will lead a SpecOps force of battalion size or larger, or who serve in the SpecOps Branch primary chain of command. These are the colonels and generals who make policy and strategic decisions regarding the use, composition, assignment and training of SpecOps forces.

805 SpecOps Team Leader

These are the junior officers who lead actual SpecOps teams in the field. SpecOps teams often work unsupported for long durations under unusual or extreme conditions, and it takes a special officer to lead them. While a captain may command an entire company of Infantry, in SpecOps a captain commands a team of 8 to 16 operators.

807 SpecOps Senior Sergeant

Due to the experience required of Marines before they even apply for SpecOps, most enlisted operators are at least sergeants. This makes the job of a senior team NCO easier, and harder: while he has experienced and professional team members under him, he must show extraordinary leadership abilities in order to earn trust and respect from them.

810 SpecOps Communications Specialist

Operators in this MOS are highly trained in the operation and maintenance of all friendly and most Threat communications systems. They may have to carry and operate as many as 12 different standard and subspace radio systems on a single mission. They must also be trained in expedient and improvised communications methods.

812 SpecOps Signal Intercept Specialist

812s intercept enemy signals in an attempt to record and interpret enemy communications and data transmissions. They may also have to jam same. And they must do both without revealing themselves or their team.

813 SpecOps Cryptographer

Breaking codes while inserted in the forward area takes a special kind of cryptographic analyst. 813s are specialists in comm codes, lingual codes, security and computer cryptography...just about any code you may come across in your op-area. 813s must undergo 810 training prior to certification in this advanced MOS, and usually serves as a team's communications operator as well as its code-breaker.

820 SpecOps Corpsman

An 820 is a combination medical intern, teacher, and public health expert...with a little veterinarian thrown in for good measure. An 820 may treat a farmer's livestock to win his support in hiding a team, teach guerilla medics how to start an IV, care for his team, treat battlefield trauma, and vaccinate a counterinsurgent's village all in one mission. More highly trained than many nurses and tougher than most Infantrymen, 820s spend more time in training than almost any other MOS.

821 SpecOps Surgeon

Quite possibly the only MOS that requires more training than an 820 is an 821: a fully-trained operator with a medical degree and special training in emergency and trauma medicine. Most 821s also have extensive xenobiology backgrounds and serve in Foreign Assistance teams on a wide range of planets with a huge variety of cultures and species.

825 SpecOps NBC Specialist

These operators are trained in the recognition, usage of, protection against, and destruction of Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical weapons. Part corpsman, part field scientist, they can also analyze unknown NBC agents and develop protective measures in the field.

828 SpecOps Field Life Scientist

828s are SpecOps-trained investigative scientists which may be called upon in the field for humanitarian aid missions, as xenobiologists to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of alien enemy, or to evaluate proposed tactics for effectiveness against an unknown biological enemy or environment.

831 SpecOps Weapons Specialist

Combine Light Infantry Light and Heavy Weapons Specialists, then train

them as Armorers and Instructors, and you have the rough level of training of an 831. Of course, you'd also have to throw in extensive training in the operation and maintenance of a wide-range of Threat weapons systems as well. Improvised weapons are also included in the training, making 831s some of the most dangerous people in the Federation.

833 SpecOps Scout/Sniper

If 831s are the most dangerous people in the Federation, 833s are the scariest. They could approach you in the middle of a grass field and be within knife-throwing range without you ever detecting them. And most times, they don't have to get nearly that close: a well-trained and practiced 833 with a P-688 rifle can hit a humanoid target at over 2km.

841 SpecOps Fire Support Specialist

An FS Spec is trained to direct naval gunfire, artillery, and/or close air support attacks on forward positions. They can also designate targets with lasers or tachyon beams for aerospace strikes. They are specialists in directing a variety of fires into any forward area with great accuracy and reliability either personally, or through the use of remotely piloted vehicles.

851 Foreign Liaison

851s are trained to serve as military advisors and instructors to foreign governments. In addition to their soldiering instruction, they receive a great deal of diplomacy training and interpersonal skills instructions. Due to their training and familiarity with foreign service, they are often assigned as "attaches" to protect members of the UFP Foreign Service, politicians, and flag officers travelling in foreign territory.

853 SpecOps Linguist

Universal translators don't always work, and even when they do, they are no substitute in a tense situation for someone who speaks the language. While every SFMC operator speaks at least two languages, 853s typically speak at least half a dozen. They are invaluable assets for training mixed forces of counterinsurgents, not to mention their intel value.

871 SpecOps Demolitions Specialist

871s are trained to use a variety of explosives, tractor and repulsor beams, and mechanical demolition tools in order to destroy just about anything. However, the extensive knowledge they need to have of structures also makes them excellent engineers in times when you have to build something. Whether it be a hide for forward recon, or a bridge repair to get supplies moving again, 871s come through under pressure.

872 SpecOps Counter-Mobility Specialist

After completing 871 training, the truly sadistic engineering types venture on to 872 training, where further emphasis is placed on obstacle plans and fortifications to slow or halt enemy advances.

873 EOD Specialist

Explosive Ordinance Disposal can be a particularly stressful vocation. Throw SpecOps training in on top of it and you have an MOS 873: one very cool customer. 873s disarm and destroy friendly and Threat munitions and explosive devices as well as analyzing emplaced or detonated devices for composition and configuration.

878 SpecOps Field Physical Scientist

An 878 functions primarily like his life sciences counterpart, except that his area of expertise includes planetary geology, physics, chemistry, etc.

882 SpecOps Recon Specialist

Special emphasis in 882 training is placed on Recon tactics, patrolling methods, and assault techniques. 882s are capable of performing all Recon Team missions, even though many serve on other Team types.

884 SpecOps Intelligence Specialist

884s are trained to gather and interpret military intelligence. This may be human intel (interviews, interrogations, field agent reports), electronic intel (ELINT), or imagery intel.

888 SpecOps Advanced Technology Analyst

Advanced alien technology may be secured, researched, analyzed, recovered and/or destroyed by 888 operators. 888s are often held responsible for technology denial as well; that is, the practice of destroying advanced technology rather than allow it to fall into the hands of the enemy or of developing cultures.

890 Special Duty Assignment
Rather than a primary MOS, this MOS is used to temporarily detach an operator from their regular duties. This usually involves a high-security operation of some sort. All Omega Team members are MOS 890s to keep their actual job qualifications and team composition classified.

Team Types

As said before, the basic operational unit of the SpecOps branch is the team. SFMC SpecOps team types are broken down by their general mission. Within team types there can be further specialization, such as an orbital insertion unit which specializes in parachuting from orbit; or a water team which specializes in beach landings or underwater ops.

It should be noted that all SpecOps team members are first and foremost professional soldiers. They are heavily cross-trained in all team type missions and any team is capable of handling any mission (which they often must, given their wide dispersion through the fleet). The team types merely indicate concentrated training in a particular area in which the team excels.

Here are the current unit types (and their informal, in some cases very unofficial, mottos) in alphabetical order.

Datawarfare: *"Born to Upload!"*

Datawarfare teams specialize in attacking enemy databases and information systems, usually through hard-wired taps or from actual enemy terminals. This obviously requires infiltration far behind enemy lines in most cases. Beyond the capacities of the average Infantry datawarfare tech, SpecOps datafighters can crack enemy communications, insert false intelligence, inject computer viruses, even reappropriate enemy assets. Datafighters receive extensive training in Threat computer systems and often work with other types of SpecOps teams.

FACTS : *"Just the FACTS, ma'am."*

"Forward Aerospace Control and Tactical Support" teams are designed to enter forward combat areas through covert insertion or infiltration methods and accomplish any one of a number of combat control measures, both in space and in planetary environments. They receive concentrated instruction in aerospace traffic control and airfield preparation. Some of the missions

FACTS teams undertake include establishing forward aerospace operating bases in minimum time where none existed before, providing remote aerospace traffic control, providing fire control and targeting information for aerospace and/or naval gunfire, or establishing and controlling drop zones and landing zones behind enemy lines.

Foreign Assistance: *"De Opresso Liber"*

Their motto means, "To free the oppressed." These units are designed to enter forward embattled areas and teach indigenous peoples how to organize military forces and conduct guerilla operations against an invading force or army of occupation. These units also travel to foreign governments and assist them in developing their own SpecOps groups. Frequently, they stay and assist trained forces in direct-action combat operations. Due to Prime Directive restrictions, specific requests for assistance must come from races already holding, or petitioning for UFP membership before an FA unit may become involved.

HEAT: *"Bring 'em back."*

These teams specialize in "Hostage Extraction and Antiterrorist Tactics". They receive specialized medical training, extensive CQB instruction, and are specialists with breaching devices. They are also some of the finest marksman in the galaxy—they have daily phaser and projectile weapons practice to keep their skills sharp. No one in the Corps shoots more than Heaters. They are also briefed on terrorist activity throughout their sector, and are called on for both reactive and proactive counterterrorist strikes.

Omega: *"Wasn't there, didn't do it."*

Omega is the name given to the SpecOps units specially trained in covert Special Actions, also known as "Black" or "Shadow" ops. They exist to perform missions which are usually considered politically sensitive or vital to Federation security. Omega units are not normally employed as battlefield resources, however they can be used in that capacity for advanced

reconnaissance. These teams may also be used to conduct missions requiring security procedures higher than is normally afforded by other SpecOps units. Generally, all Omega Team members are recruited from other SpecOps units, so they are highly trained and experienced operators.

Pararescue: *"So that others may live."*

The mission of a Pararescueman is to recover downed and injured aircrew members or starship crews in austere and non-permissive environments. Pararescuemen provide emergency medical treatment necessary to stabilize and evacuate injured personnel while acting in an enemy evading recovery role. Pararescuemen may, on rare occasions, be called upon to rescue personnel from worlds which have yet to make First Contact—which makes their mission even more sensitive. They may also have to destroy crashed vehicles or equipment—when recovery is not possible—in order to deny the technology to an enemy or to prevent its discovery by developing cultures.

Recon: *"Recon leads the way!"*

Reconnaissance units are the core unit type of the SpecOps branch. It is from this essential unit that all the others developed. They are the most numerous, most versatile, and most active SpecOps units in the SFMC. Their prime function is to infiltrate forward or foreign areas by any means available and collect information on movements, activities, structure and disposition of enemy military forces. Other missions performed by Recon include small unit direct combat actions, sabotage and force denial missions, sniper support for advancing friendly forces, and security for forward forces and other SpecOps units.

Ship Seizure: *"Prepare to be boarded!"*

These teams are rigorously trained in methods to covertly board and capture starships and space stations. They can board, sabotage and leave, or they can hold positions for follow-on boarding parties. They can frequently do this with a minimum of violence and damage to the ship, and are well-used to establish bridgeheads for Marine boarding parties against difficult targets. They receive special training in the configuration and operation of hundreds of classes of Federation and Threat vessels and operating systems and are experts in zero-g fighting.

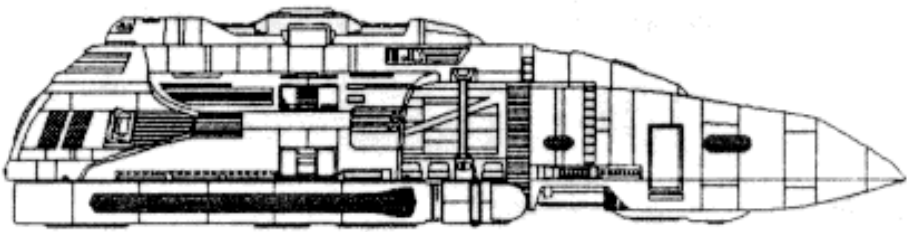
Naval Special Operations

In addition to the Marine SpecOps team types listed above, it should be pointed out that STARFLEET has its own proprietary special operations forces which it calls Special Warfare Groups, or SWGs. SWGs are part of the Fleet's Security branch and specialize in more of the particularly naval operations, and also in humanitarian and diplomatic missions. SWG missions include Smuggling Interdiction, Civil Affairs, Psychological Warfare, Humanitarian Aid, Deep Space ELINT, etc.

In one of the few service-overlap missions, STARFLEET fields its own Ship Seizure SWGs (although they are trained at the Marine Corps Ship Seizure School). STARFLEET makes the argument that ship seizure is a naval concern. Marines counter that marines throughout history have always been responsible for boarding parties, and that they are better equipped for the CQB involved in ship seizure. While the Marines' argument finds more support with UFP officials (which is why the SFMC maintains the school), it can often be difficult in the field for Marine SpecOps OICs to get their teams accepted by regional STARFLEET commanders.

A Word About Aviation

The only Marine Corps SpecOps unit type not under complete control of the SpecOps Branch is SpecOps Aerospace. This mission is jealously guarded by the Aerospace Branch under SFMC organizational mandate that all flight ops be ultimately controlled by that branch. Therefore, the Aerospace Branch supplies all flight assets (shuttles, drop ships, flight/ground crews, etc.) attached to SpecOps units; or, more typically, schedules flights of its 21st Special Aero Group in support of SpecOps teams as needed.



An MS-14 "Pave Invader" of the 21st Special Aero Group. The Pave Invader is specially equipped with advanced navigation and ECM systems for covert insertion and extraction missions. It is recognizable at a glance from its matte black sesnsor absorbent coating (SAC). There are several such variants of standard aerospace craft. An "M" prefix and a "Pave" name indicate a vehicle has been fitted with special navigation, sensor, ECM, and/or transporter systems. Most are coated with the matte black SAC.

Unit Organization

By now it should be clear that the normal "rules" of warfare do not apply to special operations. The same is true for SpecOps unit organization. Special operators work in small groups far from higher authority, and their organization reflects that. The basic operating unit of SpecOps is the team.

The SpecOps Team

A SpecOps team ranges from 8 to 16 operators (usually in increments of four so fire teams can be easily formed if needed). As with any Marine unit, even though there is a prescribed "book strength" for an "average" unit, very rarely will you find that average unit in the real world. However, most teams in the SpecOps branch will field at least the following members:

1. ***Team Leader (MOS 805)*** - usually a CPT or MAJ specializing in an area in which the rest of the team is weak.

2. ***Team First Officer (MOS 805)*** - usually a senior 1LT or junior CPT who will one day lead their own team.

3. ***Team Sergeant (MOS 807)*** - the senior NCO also covers a specialty, most commonly weapons, demolition, or comm.

4. ***Communications Sergeant (MOS 810,812, or 813)*** - handles team comm including satellite, subspace, and data transfer.

5. ***Weapons Sergeant (MOS 831 or 833)*** - operates and services squad weapons like heavy phasers, SAWs, and MAPLIMLs.

6. ***Team Medic (MOS 820 or 821)*** - cares for the team in addition to whatever medical missions the team may have.

7. ***Recon/Intel Sergeant (MOS 833, 882, 884, or 888)*** - usually a language expert, human intel specialist, and a qualified scout/sniper.

8. ***Demolitions Sergeant (MOS 871 or 872)*** - responsible for building and/or destroying whatever the team may need.

You will notice right off, that not all SpecOps MOSs are accounted for above. Not all are needed on every team; however, supplementing the above eight are as many additional specialists as may be needed for the team's mission. Team members are also extensively cross-trained to cover for each other in

the field. And although no one in a team may actually have a scout/sniper MOS, at least half of any team is usually qualified as a sniper as far as their marksmanship goes.

Larger Units

For organizational purposes, the SpecOps Branch is composed of higher-level units such as Strike Groups, Battalions, and Brigades (currently, no SpecOps Divisions exist). However, with the occasional exception of a Marine Strike Group (MSG), SpecOps units are almost never fielded in a strength larger than a team. The higher-level headquarters are simply an administrative tool. Some teams have spent a tour of as long as four years without ever even exercising with another team in their battalion.

As far as organization goes, however, the Branch tries as much as it can to balance the type of teams in a given command. For instance, a Marine Strike Group (SpecOps) is typically composed of eight teams—one of each type or some other such mix. Although, several SpecOps MSGs are composed only of Recon Teams as this is a very common deployment scheme in support of Infantry ops.

Chain of Command vs. Chain of Communication

At this point it would probably be beneficial to discuss the often convoluted way SpecOps teams receive their orders. Since a team is typically operating detached from its MSG or battalion, it usually operates in one of two ways: autonomously, or in support of another unit.

In autonomous operation, the team still takes orders directly from its higher headquarters. Chain of Command and Chain of Communication are the same thing in this case.

However, when a team (or occasionally an entire MSG) operates in support of either another SFMC unit or a starship, the Team Leader will usually take orders from the Commanding Officer of the supported unit. In this case, the team's Chain of Command goes up through the CoC of the supported unit, but they do maintain a Chain of Communication with their own higher headquarters for administrative, supply, intel, and other SpecOps-specific matters. For example, HEAT Team 2 is currently attached to the USS *Endeavour* as its MARDET (Marine Detachment). The team takes orders from the ship's Captain, but maintains a Chain of Communications with the 605th MSG (SpecOps) which is its higher headquarters.

Inside a Marine Strike Group (SpecOps)

While the simplest MSG for our example would be a homogeneously Recon strike group like the 669th MSG (SpecOps), a much more instructional portrait can be painted using one of the several mixed-force SpecOps groups in existence throughout the Corps: the 650th MSG (SpecOps).

The Shadow Angels

Currently assigned *en masse* as a MARDET aboard the USS *Odyssey*, the 650th is one of the few SpecOps MSGs to actually conduct operations as one unit, rather than having its constituent teams assigned on detached duty. This makes it a convenient model to study for organizational purposes.

The *Odyssey* serves with the Second Fleet's Rapid Deployment Force—a task force of four capital ships (*Odyssey*, *Yamato*, *Khai Tam*, and *Relentless*), and associated escorts, that carry four Marine Strike Groups (650th SpecOps, 667th Powered Infantry (Aeromobile, SOC), VMA-78, and the 674th Mecha respectively) for response to crises throughout the troubled sector they patrol. It is the wide range of missions—planned and happened upon—this force faces that make the 650th such an appropriate application of resources.

In looking at the teams that form the 650th, one notes the seemingly odd numbering scheme. Unlike other units, SpecOps teams are simply numbered in the order in which they are formed (except Omega units which are not numbered at all for security reasons).

Datawarfare Team 22

Composition (12 operators):

Leader, First Officer, Team Sergeant/Communications Sergeant, 2 Weapons Sergeants, Demolitions Sergeant, Medic, 2 Communications Sergeants (1 data-communications-trained, 1 cryptographer), 3 Datawarfare Specialists.

FACTS Team 38

Composition (8 operators):

Leader, First Officer, Team Sergeant/Communications Sergeant, Weapons Sergeant, Demolitions Sergeant, Medic, 2 Fire Support Specialists.

Foreign Assistance Team 10

Composition (16 operators):

Leader, First Officer, Team Sergeant/Weapons Sergeant, Communications

Sergeant, Demolitions Sergeant, 2 Surgeons, 2 Linguists (15 languages between them), 2 Recon/Intel Sergeants, 2 Field Scientists (1 life, 1 physical), 2 Advanced Technology Specialists.

HEAT Team 28

Composition (12 operators):

Leader, First Officer, Team Sergeant/Sniper, 2 Weapons Sergeants, Demolitions Sergeant, 2 Surgeons, Recon/Intel Sergeant, 2 Snipers, Communications Sergeant.

Omega Team

Composition (8-16 operators)

Pararescue Team 12

Composition (8 operators):

Leader, First Officer, Team Sergeant/Medic, Weapons Sergeant, Demolitions Sergeants, Communications Sergeant, Surgeon, Recon/Intel Sergeant.

Recon Team 50

Composition (16 operators):

Leader, First Officer, Team Sergeant/Communications Sergeant, 2 Weapons Sergeants, 4 Recon/Intel Sergeants, 2 Demolitions Sergeants, 2 Medics, Datawarfare Specialist, 2 Snipers.

Ship Seizure Team 8

Composition (8 operators):

Leader, First Officer, Team Sergeant/Weapons Sergeant, Communications Sergeant (with languages), Demolitions Sergeant, Medic, Recon/Intel Sergeant, Datawarfare Specialist.

You'll note that even though all teams have common elements, there are distinct differences. For example, every SpecOps team has some sort of medical operator, but while it's simply one combat corpsman for a Recon Team, it may be as many as two highly-trained surgeons for a HEAT team which is more likely to encounter heavy trauma casualties in its operations.

Also, you'll note some MOSs are not represented in this example at all (there are no NBC Specialists assigned to the 650th for example). These rarer specialties are used in other teams, rest assured; it is simply that the likely missions of the above teams will not include a need for them.

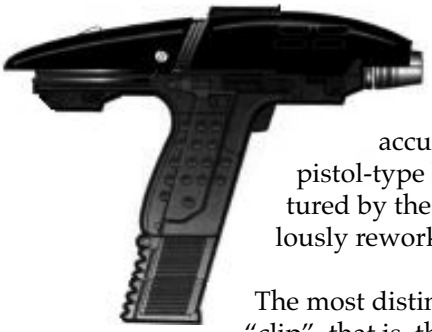
Finally, a comment on administration: note the absence of any additional Headquarters staff. In SpecOps, there are few superfluous personnel—the senior Team Leader (right now HEAT Team 28) also commands the MSG.

Part 4 - Equipment

About 60% of the weapons and equipment used by special operators are off-the-shelf Infantry and Combat Engineer equipment. Be sure you are completely familiar with the inventories of those branches before thinking yourself well-acquainted with SpecOps gear. Probably about 25% of the gear for SpecOps is classified. The remaining 15% is listed below.

Weapons

Most of the weapons carried by SpecOps teams are the same as those for Light Infantry soldiers. The standard phaser rifle is the M-116A2; the standard projectile rifle, the P-622A2 SAW; the weapon of choice for Spec-Ops snipers, the P-688; etc. Nearly all Light Infantry weapons have some application in SpecOps work, especially the M-110 phaser carbine which is used extensively by HEAT and Ship Seizure Teams, or anytime heavy CQB is anticipated. There are only a few unique weapons systems employed by the SpecOps branch.



M-45 Special Operations Hand Phaser

The M-45 is a more powerful and accurate version of the standard-issue M-3 pistol-type hand phaser. Each M-45 is manufactured by the SFMC itself: standard M-3s are meticulously reworked by hand by Corps armorers.

The most distinctive feature of the M-45 is the longer "clip", that is, the larger energy cell which protrudes from the bottom of the grip. While it does make the weapon slightly more awkward to draw, the increased power availability is worth the trouble. The M-45 is also rebalanced so that it rests comfortably in the operator's hand and is no trouble to keep on target for extended periods. Other features include a more powerful emitter and an improved sighting system.

M-9A2 Special Operations Hand Phaser

Resembling the small Type 1 Starfleet hand phaser, the M-9 is perfect for covert activity when displaying weapons would bring unwanted attention. The Marine version of the weapon is flat black, and is hardened against interference or damping as all SFMC phasers are (the primary difference between Marine and Starfleet phasers).

M-12A4 Combat Shotgun

No matter how far weapons technology advanced over the centuries, no one has invented anything better for Close Quarter Battle (CQB) against lightly armored personnel than the combat shotgun. Light, small (compared to electromagnetic projectile weapons), easily aimed (one merely needs to point the barrel in the general direction of the target), and with great stopping power, the shotgun is still used by CQB units when Threat forces are not armored or shielded.

Of course, there have been changes over the centuries. First and foremost is the chemical propellant. The mix now used burns much more efficiently, almost completely cleanly, and contains enough oxidizer so that performance doesn't suffer in zero-oxygen environments. Also, a much wider range of ammunition is now available, including several types of nonlethal rounds favored by HEAT teams.

M-100 Weapon-Mounted IDF unit

While not really a weapon in itself, the M-100 is counted here because it is invaluable to SpecOps forces who frequently work in zero-gravity environments. The M-100 makes it possible to fire weapons in zero-g without sending the firer flying backwards from the recoil. A miniature Inertial Dampening Field generator is powered by a standard W-2 power pack, and provides precise recoil damping for the weapon to which it is attached.

It will fit the stock of any SFMC rifle (including the combat shotgun), although it does make the weapon much more difficult to handle and maneuver (which is why it is not simply a standard feature on all light weapons). The M-100 is also a power hog and can drain it's clip in just a few dozen shots.

Explosives and Breaching Tools

SpecOps Teams make much more regular use of explosives and breaching tools than the average Infantryman. Operators carry and use the FES-55/56 door poppers used by the Infantry, but they also carry explosives and associated supplies for improvised devices much like Combat Engineers.

Specialized breaching devices are also used by the teams. For example, HEAT teams make use of a system of shaped charges that can be formed to match the dimensions of any door or window and deployed on an extendible boom. One team member holds the boom and places the device up to

the entry point, activates the unit, and the door or window is blown in and down with a minimum of effort. HEAT operators can then file in through the opening. NOTE: It is important in using the system, though, that the unit's top is placed at the top of the door or window: it detonates a few microseconds before the rest of the charges to blow the obstacle down to the floor. If the unit's top is placed upside down, the obstacle will be sent flipping end over end into the structure, possibly harming hostages inside.

Ship Seizure teams use a similar principle on a larger scale. They use a shuttle-mounted system that can blow in a ship's airlock doors after making a hard seal with a shuttle-mounted airlock. The Ship Seizure Team can then rush the airlock without pesky decompression problems. A more powerful version on a telescoping airlock (to protect the shuttle from back-blast) can even be used to make holes in the hull!

Personal Weapons

Every special operator is likely to have at least one (if not several) "backup" weapon of some sort. At the very minimum they will have a low-tech but highly-reliable knife. Doctrine encourages Marines to carry what they feel they need to do their job, within the limits of unit safety and practicality. Ultimately, the Team Leader is responsible for approving his team's personal weapons.

Foreign Weapons

While all Marines are familiarized with foreign weapons in Infantry School, special operators make regular use of them. They are as proficient with any Klingon, Romulan, Cardassian or Jem Hadar rifle as they are with their M-116A2. In fact, depending on the mission, SpecOps teams may leave all their Federation equipment behind and use only foreign equipment and weapons.

Personal Protective Gear

Again, much of what the SpecOps branch uses in the way of personal protective gear is taken from the Infantry inventory. Operators wear the same BDU, THEOG, and EXCHEG suits. When used with the PPG-200 rebreather, the THEOG suit is a serviceable underwater diving garment; however, specific wet and dry diving suits are also available.

Rumors of a "stealthsuit" used by SpecOps are categorically denied by the Branch. In a recently released statement, the SpecOps Branch Director said, "The Starfleet Marine Corps is prohibited by treaty from using any type of cloaking technology, which would include personal cloaking generators."

PPG-005 Extended Wear Undergarment

It sounds incredibly obvious and a little bit simplistic, but special operators need good underwear. They may be in the field, totally unsupported, for weeks or months. Their supply line is what they can carry on their back or in their pockets, and they may have to go days on end without bathing. When these factors are considered, the need for a specialized undergarment becomes understandable.

The first outstanding feature of the PPG-005 is its thermal capabilities. With a tap to a switch on the wristband of the one piece garment, it warms to body temperature—another tap, it cools to a few degrees below. It also has an external layer that not only keeps the temperature inside stable, but masks the garment (and wearer's) temperature from IR sensors.

The other notable feature of the 005 is its inner lining of antibacterial and antifungal chemicals. This allows the garment to be worn dirty for days without accumulating body odors and causing skin problems. Therefore the operator can pack far less clothing in his rucksack, saving valuable weight.

FE-7803A (SpecOps)
Marine Infantry Personal Protective Armor (MIPPA)
Special Operations Helmet

This is a special "smart" helmet worn by special operators to provide them a higher level of battlefield intelligence than the average infantryman. It also has a more sophisticated communications suite. Along with the SpecOps CEMS unit (see "Field Gear"), it can even provide Through-Visor Display TVD) of weapon targeting.

The SpecOps helmet requires a good deal of getting used to. For one thing, it's nearly twice the weight of the standard Infantry helmet. But mostly, the problem is one of "task saturation"—the helmet can provide the operator with ***too much*** information, overwhelming their senses and hampering their effectiveness so badly that the operator is useless to their team. Training focuses on sorting all the information the helmet provides until it becomes second nature. Just in case, though, helmet controls allow for shutting down the extra systems if need be.

Depending on what sensors, scanners, and intelligence systems the helmet is connected to through the SpecOps CEMS, the visor can show the operator the location of mines in his path, categorize targets and assign shooting priority, even show him adversaries hidden behind walls or around corners. It is often no replacement for a set of eyes, though: some of the more sophisticated Threat forces are already learning how to trick the system into displaying false information.

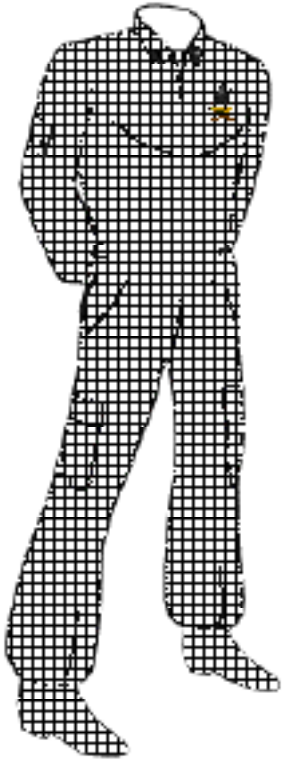
A special sniper module is also available for the helmet which can provide magnified scans to the TVD, serving as a built-in spotter scope. This module is available for the standard helmet as well, but is much more heavily used by SpecOps Snipers.

FE-7808A Lightweight MIPPA

This is a super-lightweight, thin, and flexible personal body armor that can be worn under loose-fitting civilian clothes without being detected. It does not provide nearly the same protection of standard MIPPA, but it does give undercover operators some measure of protection—particularly against small projectile weapons. The material is woven, so it can even pass for clothing itself. In fact, a hooded poncho is available which protects an operator's head and shoulders as well.

FE-7810 EOD MIPPA

A special version of the MIPPA vest and helmet are also available for EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) work. The units are both thicker and heavier than standard MIPPA. In fact, the vest is so bulky it is difficult to move in, but it is also highly blast resistant. The EOD Helmet provides a unique TVD which can superimpose on the operator's field of view real-time scans of the explosive device's internal makeup—essentially giving the operator "x-ray vision". A specially-designed set of gloves and leg protectors completes the kit.



PPG-800 Orbital Entry Jumpsuit

This one-piece jumpsuit is covered externally by flexible heat shielding in the form of interlocked tiles (see illustration at left). These tiles protect the wearer from orbital entry heat in orbit-to-ground parachuting operations. The suit also has an integral force-field unit to augment protection. The suit comes with helmet and boot covers as well as special gloves to complete the protection. The inside of the suit is a cool insulative liner that keeps the entry heat from being transmitted inside the suit.

PPG-820 Wet Suit

An underwater diving suit which provides some buoyancy and good insulation from mild water temperatures. The suit allows in a thin layer of water which it traps under its foam exterior to insulate the body. It is lightweight and easy to move in. It is also coated with anti-friction polymer to make movement through the water extremely easy.

PPG-825 Dry Suit

Slightly bulkier than the PPG-820, this diving suit is airtight, allowing no water in and instead using a layer of air trapped in the suit to insulate the wearer. This suit provides protection from much cooler temperatures, and can be worn over BDUs or THEOG suits. Since the PPG-825 is watertight, whatever the diver wears under it will remain dry and serviceable. In fact, most divers will wear the PPG-005 under the suit for added thermal stability, especially when operating in near-freezing liquid or under ice. The trade-off is that the dry suit is harder to work and swim in and is not nearly as smooth and frictionless in the water as the PPG-820.

Field Equipment

NOTE: In the same statement issued by the SpecOps Branch Director denying the existence of a stealthsuit, the director also denied the existence of a crew-portable cloaking device for unit camouflage purposes.

EWD-202SO "Holoflage" Special Operations Holographic Generator

The Infantry version of this device can cover a Light Infantry squad with a hologram, but its energy signature is easily detected by most sensors. The SpecOps version uses a classified add-on module that reduces its energy signature significantly. It also, unfortunately, reduces the useful size of the hologram and increases the generator's power consumption.

CTS-8911 Force Recon Tricorder System

This is the same unit used by some Infantry personnel. It is mentioned here only to point out it was first designed for SpecOps use. It is the standard combat tricorder issued to SpecOps personnel. It is issued with an optional peripheral control panel which can be worn over either forearm.

I-LINK 106 Communications Equipment

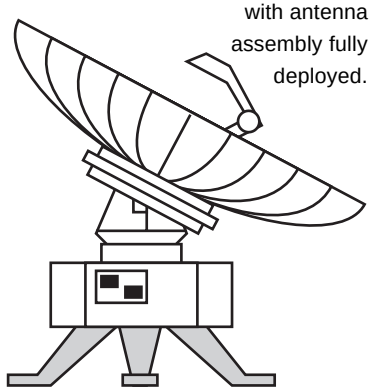
In outward appearance, this unit looks exactly like it's Infantry counterpart, the I-LINK 105. However, the SpecOps version has more channels and a physical interface for SpecOps comm gear. It also has a slightly larger range. To compensate for the added space taken up by the added components, the I-LINK 106 has no transponder. Therefore, the SpecOps helmet also carries the operator's transporter-lock and location transponder. Most operators also have subcutaneous transponders.

ANS/P-45A2 Digital Burst Antenna (DBA)

This small, lightweight collapsible antenna assembly is a necessity for special operators, particularly recon and foreign assistance teams. The antenna set is designed to operate in concert with a Force Recon Tricorder. It can receive frequency hopping, encoded transmissions of up to 400 gigabytes from the tricorder in the field from as far away as 140km. It then packages the data for burst transmission to a distant receiver. This burst averages less than 2.5 nanoseconds and is itself triple-encrypted.

The transmission can be made in one of two ways. First is unidirectional burst straight to a remote station: either a distant ground unit, a comm buoy or satellite, or a starship. The second uses a technique perfected by the Maquis called subspace signal riding. The antenna holds the burst in a buffer and waits for the next transmission anywhere within high orbital range of the planet. It then attaches the burst to the signal's carrier wave, essentially "riding" the signal out of the atmosphere without the enemy's knowledge. This method works only with omnidirectional transmissions however, unless the receiver is the same party receiving the ridden signal—you can't only ride a signal part way and then change direction.

The antenna set can be programmed for autonomous operation, or can be controlled remotely from a Force Recon Tricorder with the proper code keys. To protect the technology and the crypto information associated with the set, it can be programmed to self-destruct if moved without a proper code transmission from a tricorder, or it can be remotely detonated with a tricorder.



The DBA unit with antenna assembly fully deployed.

One of the most unique features of the set is an optional homing antigrav which can be attached to the bottom of the set. With this, the antenna can literally be flown back to the team that emplaced it. This antigrav unit is very heavy, though, and has the distinctive energy signature antigravs are famous for, which may make operation of the unit undesirable in many circumstances.

EWD-8450 Special Operations Extraction Beacon

This special long-range beacon sends an encrypted homing signal that extraction elements can use to find SpecOps teams in remote areas. The beacon can be set for omnidirectional transmission in an emergency, or unidirectional transmission when the location of the extraction force is known by the team.

Field Observation Devices

The SpecOps branch does have several unique sensor systems to aid its operators. Unfortunately most of the details of their configuration and capability are classified. However, the common EQW-28 unit used by the Infantry is still the basic package sent to the field with SpecOps teams. EQW-18 "Sentries" are also used extensively.

EQW-55 Mini-Drone

Based on the highly successful EQW-50 drone, this miniature version has half the range and endurance, but a much finer control system that allows operators to make ultra-fine course adjustments. It is also much smaller, which reduces its likelihood of being detected, and at the same time gives it access to unusual target areas its big brother could never dream of.

In one prime example, a Recon Team actually flew an EQW-55 into an exhaust vent of a target building, through its air handling ducts, and landed it right behind an intake screen in one of the targeted rooms. There it sat for two days providing the team with valuable intelligence. When the building was finally raided, the team recovered the Mini-Drone, recharged it, and packed it up for the next mission.

EQW-622 Passive Observation Collector

The POC is a suite of passive sensors which essentially extend the eyes, ears, and even noses of the team much farther than their MIPPA gear—without revealing their position. The unit carries extremely sensitive unidirectional and omnidirectional microphones; high magnification visual, infrared, and ultraviolet optical sensors; even a chemical receptor to detect odors or sense trace quantities of NBC agents to give advanced warning to the team that more may be on the way.

Electronic/Datawarfare Equipment

As in the area of observation devices, an abundance of classified technology exists in this area. The few nonclassified pieces include beefed up versions of old Infantry standbys.

Special Operations Combat Equipment Management Systems (CEMS)

The goal of the SpecOps CEMS is the same as its Infantry counterpart: to make sense of all the information (incoming and outgoing) that a Marine must deal with. However, as alluded to earlier, the special operator is trained to do more with that information, so the SpecOp CEMS is capable of processing more and doing more with it.

One of its unique capabilities is its output functions: it can actually process sensor data and coordinate it with weapon data to produce real time aim points for weapons on the TVD. In other words, the operator can see through his helmet visor where his weapon is pointed without having to use the weapon's sights. As the weapon moves, the aim point (known by operators as the 'death dot') moves with it. Of course, to use this function, the weapon must have a position sensor that plugs into the CEMS system. This has proved invaluable for CQB where "rapid aim fire" situations are the norm.

The SpecOp CEMS also has an archive function that stores all incoming data in raw form for later analysis. This unit can also be set to burst download and core-wipe in the event of imminent capture.

EWD-007SO "Super Hack Pack" Special Operations Portable Datawarfare Terminal

This is essentially a vanilla EWD-007 with more powerful RF capabilities for longer range wireless hacking. It also has a unique interfacing component sequence that makes it highly adaptable for nonstandard interfaces. It can also be preprogrammed with instructions and set to burst upload or burst download when a short-time connection is anticipated.

Special Equipment

In addition to a number of items in the Infantry and Combat Engineer inventories, SpecOps makes use of a number of pieces of special equipment, many of which are used for insertion/extraction.

OT-10A Orbital Entry Parachute

Parachuting into forward areas continues to be an important method of infiltration/insertion for special operators. Today, however, the airborne insertion may start from somewhere high above a planet's atmosphere. With personal shields and protective suits, surviving reentry heat is no longer a problem, but hitting a target on another side of a planet is. At orbital speeds, one doesn't simply fall straight down to a Drop Zone (DZ).

For this important aspect of orbital entry, the OT-10A is fitted with an orbital stabilization rig which emits a low-level suspensor field for the rig to follow into the atmosphere. It is quite a rough ride, but the field prevents excessive force on the body during entry. It also lines up the jumper's trajectory properly for the target DZ. Once safely through the upper atmosphere, the concept of terminal velocity governs the ride and all that is needed is a simple parachute.

The OT-10A features a state-of -the art orbital stabilization rig along with a heat-shielded parachute envelope. The chute itself is a standard T-14 chute as shown below. The rig has both radar and barometric altimeters and can bet set to deploy the chute automatically at a preset altitude. It also has an antigrav reserve unit. Antigravs are effective for this type of insertion, but at low altitudes they emit a definitive energy signature, so they are used for emergencies or low/no atmosphere drops only.

T-14 Free-fall Parachute

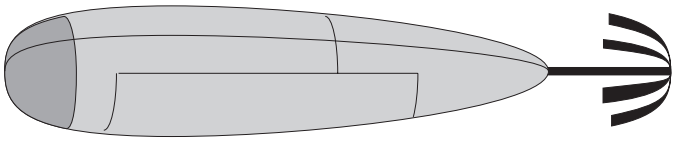
The T-14 is the same chute used in the OT-10A rig. It is a square, steerable, four-riser with a 2.7 second deployment time. It is highly maneuverable and made from clear nylex, which makes it extremely difficult to detect as most any active scanning beam (including visible light) goes right through it. The material even has a non-reflective coating to eliminate glint. Nylex is also extremely strong, so the chute can handle rapid deceleration of fairly heavy loads. Like the OT-10A it has radar and barometric altimeters. Although airborne Infantry chutes (T-12s) are constructed for preset descent rates, the T-14s descent rate is controlled by the jumper according to conditions. The T-14 may be fitted with an emergency antigrav or a reserve chute as circumstances warrant.

T-42 Personal Antigraviton Decelerator

Parachutes don't work when there is not sufficient atmosphere—no getting around it. So even though antigraviton generators have many undesirable characteristics, they are needed for airborne drops on certain worlds. The T-42 is a backpack unit slightly larger and more powerful than the T-30 which is usually used as a parachute reserve. A computer controls the descent rate and angle for the operator since the delicate balance on the antigraviton beam can be easily upset by many factors (including the operator). Larger units are also available for equipment drops.

The computer-controlled descent and definitive energy signature of antigravs make them undesirable for use unless no other insertion method runs as great a chance of success.

OT-100 Transatmospheric Drop Capsule



The OT-100 capsule. The orbital stabilization boom (black above) deploys after the capsule clears the launcher.

Smaller than a Powered Infantry drop capsule, the OT-100 allows humanoid operators to transit the upper atmosphere in the safety of a tripolymer ablative cocoon rather than a heat-shielded jumpsuit. The capsule has its own stabilization rig, and the ablative heat shielding protects the occupant, slows the capsule, and creates multiple sensor images to ground based systems as it breaks up, confusing the location of the operator. Once safely inside the atmosphere the capsule jettisons in several pieces, further cluttering enemy sensors. The operator can then descend with a standard T-14 chute or T-42 antigrav.

FMG-10 Mountaineering Rig

This is actually a set of equipment which includes harnesses, ropes, tools and accessories an operator needs to scale rock or ice formations. Although these types of operations are usually left to so-called "alpine" units, all operators are trained in alpine ops and may make use of the FMG-10 kit.

FMG-22A3 Mountaineering Boots

These boots are similar to the jet boots worn by recreational climbers throughout the Federation. However, the 22A3 boot jets are up to 88%

quieter, produce 50% lower infrared emissions, and have 29% more lifting capacity. They can also be linked to an external fuel source for extended operations. While the boots do still emit noise and IR signatures, they still run less risk of detection then energy-hogging, signature-blaring antigravs. They are murder to walk in and heavy to carry, however.

PPG-275 Diving Rig

This is another equipment set which includes a high-capacity rebreather, a buoyancy control device, a protective mask (although the MIPPA helmet can be sealed to either diving suit), swim fins, and various other accessories needed for underwater diving. The rebreather provides nearly two hours of air for an average humanoid, and since it is a rebreather there are no exhaust gases to form telltale bubbles which may give away a diver's presence.

FMC-54G Field Medical Kit

This kit contains all the components of the average Infantry FMD-54E kit, plus an IV kit and several IV bags of dehydrated lactated ringers solution for emergency fluid replacement. To use a bag, unroll it and fill with sterilized water. Species not compatible with lactated ringers replace their IV bags with ones containing solutions suitable for their body chemistry.

FMD-54S Field Surgical Kit

The Team Medic carries this complete field surgery kit. Its contents rival the suitcase-sized Starfleet Medical field kits, but in addition, the 54S contains primitive scalpels and other non-energy using/emitting surgical tools. This is due to two factors: one, the medic may have to give treatment in an environment where energy emissions might give him or his unit away; and two, the medic may need the kit to give instruction to indigenous populations which do not have access to powered surgical tools. The kit also contains a limited amount of veterinary drugs and equipment.

SpecOps Rations

Special operators carry what most in the service call "hard-core" rations. These are supplement bars which provide a full complement of vitamins, minerals, calories, and protein, but are very small and ultra-light. This substantially reduces the pack load for operators, even though the rations are unanimously hailed as disgusting from a culinary standpoint.

Part 5 - Tactics and Training

After a brief introduction to SpecOps training, some common tactics of special operations will be discussed. This is not intended to be a full course of tactics, merely an introduction. One particular tactical operation in each unit type is discussed as a way for you to get acquainted with SpecOps doctrine and operating methods.

Selection

Before candidates get anywhere close to BASS, they must undergo a rigorous background check, medical and psychological evaluations, and gruelling physical, oral, and written exams. Before even reaching this stage, however, they must meet minimum requirements to submit an application.

Minimum Selection Criteria

Below are the MINIMUM criteria before a Marine may even apply for SpecOps training. All candidates must:

- have at least 3 years distinguished service with the SFMC.
- speak at least two languages fluently.
- be parachute qualified or successfully complete parachute training before entering BASS.
- score above 265 (out of 300) on marksmanship qualifications with both phaser and projectile rifles.
- have scored an average of not less than 350 (out of 500) on their semiannual PT test for the last three years.
- have a psych profile score of not less than IC-4.

Average Selection Criteria

While the above are the minimum acceptable values, the SpecOps program attracts nothing but the best. Below are the current AVERAGE criteria possessed by SpecOps candidates. The average SpecOps applicant today:

- has 3.8 years distinguished service with the SFMC.
- speaks three languages fluently.
- is parachute qualified.
- scores 281 on marksmanship qualifications.
- scores an average of 418 on their semiannual PT test.
- has a psych profile score of IB-3.

About 65% of SpecOps candidates come from the Infantry branch. 10% come from the Medical branch, another 10% from Combat Engineers, the remaining 15% are a scattering from other branches. Few candidates come from Aerospace since that branch has its own SpecOps component wherein pilots can remain pilots (try to get a pilot to give up flying—or for that matter, try to get a Mecha pilot to give up his machine).

Training

Most branches of service have a short basic school followed by MOS training and then job assignment where the student receives OJT (on the job training). That's why you don't find much in the branch guidebook on training: it's pretty standardized and mostly unremarkable. As you may imagine, those rules, like so many others, don't apply to SpecOps.

BASS (BAsic Specops School)

BASS (pronounced "base") is the initial eight-month training program that all SpecOps members go through. It is a gruelling and intensive course, especially the first 16 weeks...and in particular, week 8: Motivation Week.

The first 16 weeks of BASS are conducted on two planets in the New Valley Forge system (TRACOM's headquarters). NVF III-A (one of two planets in a Trojan orbit in the third star-orbiting ring) has high gravity, a thin atmosphere, and high daily temperatures (much like Vulcan). NVF IV has high gravity, a thick atmosphere, and a low daily average temperature. Classes alternate between the two planets every 16 weeks (i.e. - class 226 will be on NVF III-A, class 227 will be on NVF-IV). Candidates are assigned to the environment they would be LEAST suited to naturally, so a candidate may wait for as long as 16 to 18 weeks between being accepted into the program and beginning BASS.

When recruits arrive at basic training in the SFMC, they are given up to 10 days to acclimate themselves to the atmosphere and gravity of their training world. BASS candidates are given no such luxury. From the moment they arrive, instructors are providing a high-stress, high activity environment. It simulates real SpecOps: a team may be infiltrated onto a new planet and expected to immediately act—combat allows little acclimation time. In a BASS class of 60 students, an average of 5 drop out the first week due to poor conditioning, injury, or just plain quitting.

The first seven weeks of training are mostly physical conditioning: running, climbing, swimming, obstacle courses, marches with heavy packs, etc. Less than a fourth of the way through their training, BASS students are already

in better shape than most of the Marine Corps. Another 5 students drop out during this phase of the training.

When students voluntarily terminate their training, they place their MIPPA training helmet, with their name and class number stenciled on it, on the deck outside the door of the chief instructor's office. Even before week 8, the line of helmets seems excessively long. Students with injuries are allowed to recycle to the next class if they will recover in time. Long term or permanent injuries are involuntarily terminated from the training and returned to the Corps.

Week 8 of BASS is known to the public as Motivation Week. It is known to the students as Hell Week. Hell Week starts at midnight with students being roused from their bunks with simulated artillery fire and instructors "motivating" them through loudspeakers and water hoses. Over the next seven days they will get a total of six hours sleep. They will be put through mind-numbing drills in swimming, running, and climbing. Instructors provide intense psychological stress as well as physical stress to give students a small taste of what they may encounter in the field. Of the remaining 50 or so students, an average of 15 will quit or be involuntarily terminated. As many as 10 will be recycled for injuries. In some classes the figures are much higher. By the end of Hell Week, helmets are lined on both sides of the corridor leading to the CI's office.

After week 8, though, very few students quit. Perhaps another 5 over the next six months. A class that started with 60 students will graduate an average of 20. The largest class to graduate has been 37, the smallest, 5.

After Hell Week, training becomes much more focused on the skills all special operators need. For the remaining eight weeks on their initial training world, BASS students learn the essential elements of infiltration and exfiltration, SpecOps fieldcraft, survival, clandestine tradecraft, etc.

The next three months consist of field training on a variety of ranges and training worlds. Students learn diving, alpine skills, SpecOps parachuting skills, aerospace assaults, escape and evasion (including a week in a very realistic POW camp simulation), and shooting, shooting, and more shooting.

Night phaser practice at the BASS free fire range on New Valley Forge IV.

Special operators may spend months from a resupply point and must operate for that period on only the ammunition they carry—so every shot must count. Students are taught long and short range marksmanship with rifles, as well as CQB with pistols, carbines and shotguns. Students also go through endless shoot/don't shoot drills since many will be operating in areas with civilians, hostages, or other noncombatants.

The last month of BASS is an exercise known as Grand Luxe. This is a full-up field operation consisting of two separate but related two-week missions. The students are divided into teams, infiltrated into the exercise area with an instructor, and allowed to carry out missions behind "enemy" lines. The instructor is there only for safety purposes—the student team leader runs the operation. It is the most gruelling final exam in the Federation.

Team-Specific Training

Graduates of BASS are then assigned to the team type of their choice, provided their aptitudes match openings that exist. Then they begin their team-specific training or TST.

There are rarely enough BASS graduates in any team type to form a training team right away, so the blanks in the files are often filled with other Marines or other UFP military or paramilitary members who receive team training as part of an exchange program, or for some other purpose. For example, UFP Police special tactics teams are often sent for HEAT training. Starfleet Security forces often attend Ship Seizure training, etc.

Here students learn the specific skills to accomplish their team's mission. TST lasts from eight to sixteen weeks depending on the course (Datawarfare and FACTS are the shortest, HEAT and Foreign Assistance are the longest.

Omega Training

No one from the BASS graduating class gets to pick Omega. Omega picks you...and never from the BASS grads. Omega taps special operators already serving with teams who have at least two years SpecOps experience. The length and nature of the training (even the location of the training facility) are classified.

Infiltration Tactics

Infiltration and exfiltration are arguably the most intricate and critical skills for a special operator. Nine times out of ten, the operator cannot accomplish his mission without successful (and usually covert) infiltration. Op Areas may be infiltrated by land, sea, air or space, and the particular route and technique will vary widely based on conditions and operational parameters. What works in one instance may not in the next—flexibility is the key.

Air Infil

Infiltration of an Op Area from above it is known as Air Infil, whether accomplished from orbit or atmosphere. Of course, the object of Air Infil is to place your assets in position without the enemy's knowledge, so his capabilities as well as your own must be taken into account. How good are his sensors and air traffic control systems? Do adequate drop zones (DZs), landing zones (LZs) and rallying points exist? Are there personnel on the ground who can act as a reception committee, help to transport your team, and help you sanitize the DZ after use? Are suitable aerospace craft available? If dropping from orbit, what are his orbital detection and defense capabilities? All these things and more must be well considered. The most common air infils are via parachute and via drop shuttle.

Airborne Operations

Whether inserting your team into the Op Area, or being resupplied, parachuting is often the best method. It is not as fast as a transporter, but it is MUCH less detectable. Parachute operation is covered in the equipment section. However, there is much more to airborne ops than pulling a rip cord. In the mission planning stages, proper DZs must be selected, and in the execution phase, many factors must be considered.

Selecting a DZ

Shape. The DZ should be equally accessible from all directions, so the best shape is round or square, even though your team and equipment will land in a line parallel to your aircraft's course or your deorbit axis. If you must use an oblong DZ, the drop axis must be in line with the aircraft's route of most success and least danger. A shuttle can hover if it must, but it makes the aircraft a sitting duck for the duration of the drop. Pilots always prefer to keep their craft moving.

Terrain. A suitable DZ will have fairly flat and level ground free from obstructions such as rocks, trees, fences, power lines, etc. DZs should be

chosen with an eye for nearby cover. Avoid extremely hard or icy ground to minimize landing injuries. Try to locate DZs in soft snow or grassland. Remember that parachutes fall faster in thin atmosphere, so particular effort should be made to locate soft DZs in these conditions. Avoid water-covered DZs unless your team is equipped appropriately. Water-covered DZs are particularly dangerous to heavily-laden personnel (which special operators almost always are). If dropping into water without diving gear, make sure: it is about one and a half meters deep; it is clear of obstructions on and below the surface; it is 10°C or warmer; it is free of swift currents and shallow areas; and there must be a foolproof recovery system that assures personnel do not remain in the water long.

Waypoints. The further an aircraft has to fly on a heading without waypoints, the more likely it is to be off course. Flying just one degree off course for 100km can put an aircraft nearly 2km away from the DZ. Therefore your DZ should be chosen with consideration for waypoints—features that can be used to update the aircraft's position along the route to the DZ. The easiest way to do this is to select an easily identified landmark 8 to 24 km from the DZ. The pilot can then take his bearings from this point before his final approach to the DZ. Remember that features that stand out on the ground may not from the air. Some examples of good waypoints:

- Distinctive stretches of coastline, especially with breaking waves or white sand beaches that are seen easily at night.
- River mouths over 50 meters wide.
- Rivers more than 30 meters wide.
- Canals with a straight course and consistent width..
- Lakes at least one square km in area, especially of a distinctive shape or feature.
- Woods or forests a square km in area with clear-cut boundaries or some special identifying feature.
- Major road intersections.
- Railways or tube transportation lines.

Dispersion. When dropping from a moving aircraft or making an orbital drop, your stick (the line of team members jumping) will obviously fall in a line with space between each person. This is called dispersion. For low-level aircraft drops, dispersion can be estimated by multiplying half the

speed of the aircraft in knots by the amount of time between the first jumper and the last. HALO (High Altitude, Low Opening) or LOLO (Low Orbit, Low Opening) operations require finer calculations. The point is that dispersion must be accounted for in choosing a DZ of the proper width.

Reception Committee. Whenever possible, have friendly forces standing by on the ground to secure the DZ and help recover your team.

Preparing your team

When preparing a team for airborne insertion, remember that aircraft load capacity may limit the amount of equipment and personnel you can take. Multiple drops may be required if suitable drop shuttles are not available. If this is the case, be careful about which team members you choose to drop first: they must secure the DZ and hold it while remaining drops are made. A hot DZ may be indefensible, so alternate insertion methods may be required. Don't get so focused on making an airborne op succeed that you can't see when the idea of airborne infil is unworkable.

Remember that the team leader must be in the optimal position in the stick to control the unit on the ground. If dropping in HALO or LOLO ops, team members will likely rendezvous in the air to assure minimum dispersion. Stick position becomes irrelevant here—the order in which members leave the rendezvous formation becomes the key.

If a reception committee is to be used, recognition and contact signals and code words must be agreed upon in advance. Make sure they are communicated to the reception committee before drop.

The best planned drops go bad. Make sure all team members can navigate to rallying points on foot if they land off course. The primary point should be 100 to 200 meters from the DZ, the secondary point should be 5 to 10km from the DZ. In a LOLO drop by capsule, capsule dispersion (especially in thick atmospheres) may prevent an air rendezvous. Care must be taken that deorbit trajectories will lead to a precision landing. A bad deorbit can leave personnel on the opposite side of a planet from one another, calling for emergency extraction and mission abort.

Sanitizing the DZ

When the drop is complete, all chutes and chute rigs should be collected, hidden or destroyed (each rig has a destruction mechanism). Damage to landscape should be repaired to the greatest extent possible. Nothing should be left behind as evidence of your presence there. If landing in a field with green plants, spray the area with chloromask—chlorophyll from broken plants will show up in IR scans. Leave the area ASAP.

Air Assault

When conditions allow, riding all the way down to the ground in a drop shuttle is much preferable to parachutes. The team lands together in a tight, cohesive unit. There is less chance for injury as well. However, there is usually a greater chance of detection also. Care must be taken in choosing LZs and approach routes, and timing is often vital.

Choosing an LZ

Many of the same considerations apply to LZs as DZs. Since all drop shuttles are capable of vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL), LZs can often be smaller than DZs, but the ground must be harder in order to support the weight of the shuttle (minimizing antigrav use minimizes detection risk). Care must also be taken to avoid LZs with many surrounding obstacles. A choice of clear approach paths gives the pilot flexibility and minimizes antigrav use.

Deployment

When deploying from a drop shuttle, the commander's position in the formation is considered just as his position in a stick. He must be in the ideal location to control the team as soon as it hits the ground. The team should deploy rapidly and disperse, clearing the VTOL area of the shuttle and providing a good defensive perimeter. The first operators out should take up close, quick positions to cover the egress of the rest of the team. When the drop shuttle is clear, the team should immediately head for cover.

The most common air assault team deployment is the ramp egress. Here, operators wait until the shuttle is grounded or nearly so, then run or jump down the ramp to the ground. If jumping, be sure the shuttle is at a height which prevents injury. Twisting your ankle in your enthusiasm to hit the ground will not help your team.

The next most common deployment will be fast roping. In this method, several ropes are lowered from the shuttle and operators slide down them using special rappeling rigs and heavy gloves. This method has the advantage of the smallest LZ, since the shuttle doesn't actually have to make groundfall—it only needs enough room for the ropers to avoid hitting obstacles on the way down.

Another common deployment method is Extremely Short Range (ESR) transport. At extremely low altitudes, a short range transporter is hard to detect. The only drawbacks to this method is that drop shuttles rarely have the power and buffer capacity to transport the whole team simultaneously,

so planning must be as for a multiple drop airborne insertion. The other drawback is the possible presence of enemy scattering and dampening fields which disrupt transporter operation.

Wet Infil

Infiltrating an Op Area by water or some equivalent liquid body (depending on planet) is known as Wet Infil. Many of the same considerations for Air Infil apply to Wet Infil. First of all, what sort of coastal areas are available for the landing? What is the depth and efficiency of coastal defenses? Do you have the right sort of marine craft to accomplish the landing? Do you have the facilities to assure the water or liquid will not damage team equipment? All must be considered when deciding on a Wet Infil. The most common types are boat landings and beach swims.

Boat Landings

Landing a boat, hovercraft, or skimmer on an enemy beach is a tricky task in the best conditions, but you will rarely have the best conditions. Therefore, planning and rehearsal (if possible) are your best allies.

Selecting a Landing Site

If you are landing a boat of some type, be sure to choose a landing area which has a relatively shielded approach from coastal observers and sensors. If energy and/or noise emissions are not a problem, you can use motors. However, if you will need to paddle in, be sure to factor tides and wave forces into your equation. If your team will have to paddle too hard, they may not be in any shape for the mission when they land.

Also look for relatively flat and smooth beaches free of obstructions like rocks or reefs. Remember that obstructions covered by a comfortable depth of water at high tide may be exposed during low tide. Rock portage (landing a craft against rocks or a rocky surface) is dangerous even to trained SpecOps teams and should be avoided if possible.

Keep in mind that you will have to sanitize the landing area. Will you be using water craft for your exfiltraion as well? If so, where will you hide your boats? If not, what will you do with your boats and how will you remove evidence of their destruction if applicable? In beach landings, make sure your trailing team member brushes the sand behind your team to conceal your presence, strength, and direction of travel.

Beach Swim

The most covert Wet Infil is to swim underwater right up to the beach. It has many advantages, but also many logistical considerations. First off, how will your team get into the water? An aquashuttle or submarine are optimum for long trips. They can often transport your team right to the edge of the beach, leaving only a short swim. It takes time to get the whole team out, but hopefully that will not be a problem if the craft is well sound and energy dampened. Another method if entering the water is a parachute drop wearing diving gear. Deploying from a surface craft can work, but usually leaves a long swim since they cannot approach the coast as closely. Lastly, the option of starting on a friendly beach nearby and swimming down coast or cross-channel should not be overlooked.

Once in the water, many of your concerns will mimic those of a boat landing: tides, waves, distance to swim, sanitizing the landing area, etc. If swimming out will be required for exfiltration, be sure you will have enough air left in your rebreather for the trip back!

Land Infil

The last category of infiltrations are Land Infils. Infiltration over land is very similar to a long-range patrol in enemy territory, and can be the most

A Recon Team on a land infil. Most any infiltration eventually becomes a Land Infil at some point, so there are some advantages to going overland to begin with. Simplicity is the key: a plan's chances of success are inversely proportional to its complexity.

secure way of all to get your team in place, especially if time is not all-important. Distance is not necessarily a problem to fit, well-equipped SpecOps units trained to use their skills, wits and resources.

Where you can get help from friendlies already in place, to provide food, shelter, and intelligence, overland infiltration is often the most effective of all. Because DZs and LZs are unlikely to be right next door to the Op Area, both Air and Wet Infils will probably end up as overland journeys anyway. So there's a lot to be said for relying on your own two feet rather than on technology.

A straight Land Infil will begin in friendly territory, and the team will simply walk to the Op Area. Of course, it really isn't a simple walk at all: most of the travel will be at night to avoid detection, and it may be in an area not supported by navigation or positioning satellites. Teams will have to rely on maps and direction-finding devices as well as good, old-fashioned landmarks and pace counts for navigation. Be sure your map is as accurate as possible and that you have the very latest intel on the area.

Another method of infiltration that falls broadly into this category is to install the team into an area BEFORE the enemy moves in and takes over. Long-range planning and intelligence will dictate whether this is a real possibility in any given situation. Obviously, maintaining security will be the most difficult part of the operation. Safe houses and refuges will need to be set up in advance, communications established, caches of supplies and rations stored away, and all without anyone outside the organization having any idea of what's going on.

In the countryside, your team can camouflage and conceal itself. You are trained to move silently and to live in the country for extended periods without revealing yourself. The same will not necessarily apply in urban areas, though, where you will no doubt require the help of the locals to provide security, communications, and many times supplies.

Team Tactics

In this section, one example mission from each type of team will be given along with some general comments. Not every operation could be shown in this manual, but the examples below will give you a better idea of how each team type operates.

Datawarfare: Passing on a Little Virus

One of the most effective methods for disrupting Threat Information Systems (TIS) is to infect them with a computer virus. However, this is not easy in today's computing environment: communications programs strip off viruses and eliminate them before an incoming transmission even makes it to a mainframe; watchdog programs alert operators of attempts to rewrite code; and unknown storage devices (chips, rods, disks) are automatically denied access to processors.

Therefore, the most effective method in today's environment is to ensure the virus is "hard-wired" into the system, that is, the virus code should be burned into a communications, logic, or memory device in the system. This will at least get by communications and storage device safeguards. The data infiltration must still get by watchdog programs, though, and stay in the system long enough to reach all processors on the network.

Preparing the Virus

When writing the virus, resist the temptation to write algorithms that outright defeat or suppress the watchdog programs—TIS security will often detect the failure of the watchdog to be operating. Instead, concentrate on writing routines that reroute watchdog queries or give convincing false responses that prevent further or more detailed queries.

Next, burn the virus into a hardware component. The best is a communications device, but a logic or memory device can also be used. It must be something that either the CPU or network slave processors access frequently if the virus must spread over a large network quickly. The choice of component varies by mission and you may actually need to burn more than one type of component. The component(s) on which the virus is burned are now known as the infectious component(s), or IC for short.

At this point, you can formulate a plan to insert the IC into the TIS directly. However, this is often problematical: you will need to remove the old component and install the IC, and some of these devices have a staggering amount of connections. This can take a lot of time. Also, it leaves your component vulnerable to discovery by Threat forces during routine mainte-

nance checks. In the amount of time you'll have to work, your installation job will not look like replicated work—it will be obvious to anyone poking their head into the access panel that a component has been switched.

If at all possible, the IC should be wired into a sealed unit that can be replaced as a whole much more quickly with much less risk of detection. This sealed unit should be of Threat manufacture whenever possible, so the casing can in no way be identified as foreign. A good example is a subprocessing module (SM). A stolen SM can be cracked and the IC wired in carefully with the luxury of time back at base. The SM can then be carefully sealed so the tampering is invisible. During infiltration, all your team will have to do is unplug a good subprocessor, and replace it with the now-contagious one. Much quicker and cleaner than switching out individual components.

Another good method is to wire the IC into a peripheral of some sort which directly communicates with network elements. In fact, this is the oldest form of datawarfare virus implantation: during Earth's Persian Gulf War in 1991, the United States' National Security Agency nearly pulled off a plan to disable the Iraqi air defense network by burning an EPROM with a virus and then wiring it into a printer that was to be smuggled into Iraq and installed on the network.

Getting the Virus In

Now that the virus is written, tested, and hard-wired, you must get it into the TIS. The easiest way to do this is actually to plant the peripheral or sealed-unit into a regular shipment or supply of similar enemy components destined for installation. However, if time is of the essence, this method will usually not work—you can't count on *when* the contagious element will be installed in the system. If time is not all-important, however, this is the method that places your team at the least risk.

If the virus must be up by a certain deadline, the Datawarfare Team will probably have to infiltrate the Op Area containing the TIS covertly. To plant the virus, you will usually have to get all the way into a building or other sensitive area without being discovered. Methods for infiltration will vary by enemy sensor capabilities, building design, environmental conditions, and the like; but may include entry through environmental systems (air ducts), ESR (Extremely Short Range) transport, or forced entry.

Forced entry is usually a poor choice unless: 1) a suitable diversion can be created; 2) the team can be in and out before reinforcements arrive; and 3) the team can carry out a convincing decoy operation (hacking a database for example) so that the enemy does not search too closely for the hardware plant.

If you have time, try to run the system with the virus installed to see if your program will indeed defeat the watchdogs. If you set off virus alerts, grab as much data as you can, take out your contagious element, and get out. The virus implantation didn't work—but the data may reveal another opening for the next virus, and taking the contagious element with you denies the enemy the ability to analyze your attack. This means when the next program is ready, the same elements may be used if another attempt is to be made.

FACTS: Calling in Fire

One of the most common missions for a FACTS Team is combat control and damage assessment in the forward area. During such a mission, the FACTS Team serve as forward air controllers to guide aerospace craft to the right targets and evaluate the effectiveness of their strikes. In order to remain effective throughout the duration of the air campaign, the FACTS team must keep from revealing their position to the enemy while at the same time being in a good position to observe potential targets.

Selecting Observation Sites

Survey the Op Area maps and holos carefully to select several observation sites for your team. Also review intelligence on the area daily during your mission planning phase. Plan on a primary and at least one secondary site for each target package (more than one backup site is useful if available). This will be necessary in case your primary site is compromised, or on insertion you discover some condition of the primary site that makes it unusable. A good site will have a wide field of view of the surrounding area, be defensible, have clear routes to fall-back positions and rally points, and be easily camouflaged.

During your mission rehearsal phase, set up as convincing a holodeck simulation as you can of each position. Have members of other teams search the simulation for you and your team. This will reveal weak spots in your camouflage or position selection. Be adaptable to changing sites by having several alternates in mind.

Also be sure to pick a defensible fall back position in the event you are compromised. You will usually be storing a cache of supplies and equipment here in case your primary gear must be abandoned or destroyed, so make sure your fall back position has adequate features for storage (loose soil for digging, a cave, rock formations, etc.).

In position

Once you have infiltrated, stored your fall back cache, and established your observation site, you are ready to start communicating with the aerospace forces. To communicate with fighters and their controllers, you will have several types of radios, and a larger than average supply of crypto gear to keep all the communications secure. Make sure you have an established procedure to keep these items (particularly the crypto gear) secure. Have a destruction plan in the case the worst possible scenario plays out.

Check all the targets in your package that are visible from your site. Match what you observe against intelligence estimates. Keep in mind that intelligence can be disturbingly inaccurate—you may have to alter the battle plan according to what you observe.

Calling the Airdales

Once you have established contact with aerospace controllers, report any changes in attack plan based on your observations. Confirm that controllers have the proper assets in the proper positions to cover your changes. When you have agreed on the final approach plan, stand by to direct individual flights or craft to their targets. Remember which planes have which call signs to avoid confusion once they begin to maneuver.

When communicating on the radio, you must keep several things in mind. Even though you are on a secure net, assume an enemy is listening. Keep your messages brief, use call signs and code words, and use battle code (BATCO) to designate grid references and coordinates. You will use a different voice than your normal conversational tone. Remember RSVP:

- ***Rhythm.*** Divide your message up into logical portions, and deliver it at an even cadence with pauses. Remember the recipient may have to enter coordinates as you speak.

- ***Speed.*** BATCO delivered too quickly can lead to mistakes; delivery must be slightly slower than normal speech to assure first-time understanding.

- ***Volume.*** Speak slightly louder than normal, but don't shout; this just distorts the message.

- ***Pitch.*** Try to pitch your voice slightly higher than normal; this enhances clarity.

Marking Targets

On occasion you may actually mark the targets for the air strike in one of several ways. The most commonly used three methods are:

- ***Tachyon Beam.*** By using the TDRS-28 Target Designator, you can illuminate a target with a tachyon beam. The most outstanding feature of this method is that the tachyon signature takes nearly 30 minutes to degrade, and weapon guidance sensors can still detect it for most of that time. This means you can "paint" several targets ahead of time.

- ***Laser Beam.*** More conventional and mundane is the laser target designation feature of the TDRS-28. For this method, only one target at a time can be painted, and the beam must be kept on the target right up until weapon detonation.

- ***Smoke.*** Even more basic are smoke rockets and 40mm grenades which can be launched into the target area so that pilots can more clearly see where the target is. This is especially useful in heavily wooded or jungle areas. The principle disadvantage to this method is its potential to reveal your own position to Threat forces. ***Never launch smoke from your observation site.*** Always proceed a good distance away before launching, and use care in returning to ensure you are not followed.

All target marking methods run the risk of revealing your position, so they must only be undertaken when an emergency extraction plan is in effect, or in extreme circumstances.

BDA

After the initial strike, you must perform an instant Battle Damage Assessment (BDA) of the target to determine the effectiveness of the strike. You will have three general prearranged code words to indicate strike effective-

ness. The first will mean "totally destroyed"; when calling this BDA, the strike craft is free to move to its secondary target. The next will mean "partially damaged, but serviceable" this means the target is no longer operational, but could be soon with work. The last code word will mean "strike ineffective" and will usually mean you'll have to recall the craft in on another vector or with a different weapon.

Danger Close

You will mostly conduct combat control missions well in advance of friendly ground forces. However, if friendly forces are advancing faster than anticipated, they may arrive at your position while you are still calling fire. In this case, your role switches to calling close air support fires. Care must now be taken to place fires with precision to avoid friendly fire. When arranging fire within 200m of friendly forces, all calls should be prefaced with "danger close" to indicate to the pilot he is placing ordnance dangerously close to friendly troops and should positively ID targets visually.

Foreign Assistance: Building an Army

Indigenous training operations are disputably one of the most challenging and inherently dangerous missions that may be undertaken by a Foreign Assistance Team. More importantly, they are one of the most politically important endeavors that can be conducted by forces representing Federation interests.

Evaluation

Before your team is inserted 'in country', an evaluation of the area and people you will be working with will be conducted—usually by Federation or allied intelligence agencies. During evaluation, intel conducts observation and survey of a population, and ascertains whether or not enough popular sympathy exists for safe contact, and whether sufficient resources (personnel and equipment) exist to form a fighting force.

Contact

Contact is normally done by intel operatives who have been in place for a length of time. During this stage, agents will identify local leaders, and make efforts to recruit the support of those peoples. Once that support is secured, a primary time line is developed for contact with Foreign Assistance Teams.

Infiltration

At this stage, your team enters the game. Your mission planning phase will have included rehearsals of infiltration and all the contact codes and passwords for linking up with Intel contacts or local resistance leaders. Now is the time to put that to work. Once you are introduced to the indigenous forces, you must make an immediate effort to build a rapport with the leadership. They will often be distrustful, and may initially refuse your help and demand your equipment. At this stage you may supply them with food, medical supplies, and (using good judgement) ammunition; but unless otherwise instructed by higher authority, never surrender your weapons.

Organization

Once you have built a rapport with the indigenous forces, it is time to set up an organization plan with their leader, and to establish a training schedule. Always keep in mind that this entire operation must be kept from the occupying force that the locals will be fighting, so training may be awkward and difficult. Listen to what the locals have to say when it comes to enemy intelligence. They have often been fighting this enemy for a long time before you arrived, and they know what they're talking about.

Now is the time to supply the locals with the balance of equipment you've brought with you for their use. It is also the time to begin forming "underground railroads", communications channels, safe houses and partisan parties. This will provide a safe haven for locals to use as refuge after an operation or attack. Once these logistical considerations have been addressed, you can get down to the work of training the locals.

Instruction

The instruction phase is when your team conducts the training of indigenous forces. Time lines and subjects taught vary, depending on what the emphasis of the forces may be, language and cultural barriers, the teachability of the forces, and the violence of the conflict. A good rule of thumb is:

- Military indoctrination - 1 month
- Firearms and munitions - 2 weeks
- Tactics and movements - 1 month
- Recon and Intel - 3 weeks
- Specialized ops - 2 weeks

Of course, these figures are for training civilians. If your force is composed of experienced fighting forces, your timetable will be shorter. This also

assumes the local leaders will allow you this kind of time—they may instead demand action from their forces sooner, and you will have to compress your schedule accordingly.

Throughout the instructional stage, your team will accompany training forces on all missions. At first, your own team members will lead the various elements of local forces, but resist the temptation of continuing this trend. Eventually, this force will have to lead itself, and you'd better be sure they can before you leave. Near the end of your tour in country, you will be serving as a subordinate to the local commander on missions—a very unnerving experience, but necessary.

Additional Equipment

Once your team leader provides confirmation to higher headquarters that the indigenous unit is ready for action, the Federation government will normally sanction funding to STARFLEET Command for the purchase of appropriate weapons and equipment. This does not mean you give them your weapons—the cardinal rule of never surrendering your weapons still applies.

What this does mean is that weapons and equipment will start to be provided for the locals in one of several ways. Most popular are airdrop, aeromobile or suborbital matter-transport, or by providing crypto replicator chips for local weapons replication if possible. If the latter is chosen, guard your replicator chip set as closely as your communications crypto elements and have a destruction plan. No matter how friendly the local force is to you or the UFP, never turn over the chip set or replicator equipment. Make sure only your team operates the replicators and that they are set to self-destruct if tampered with.

Support

After the indigenous unit enters the field as an operational unit, Federation policy is to continue providing guidance and supervision of trained forces. Normally this support comes in the form of Recon teams operating in the Op Area in conjunction with Indigenous teams, but will not normally include Aerospace support and the like.

HEAT: Hostage Rescue

Hostage extraction is what HEAT teams are all about. However, developing only one set of tactics for hostage rescue would be naive and ineffective. Every situation is different: To cover every eventuality of even this one

mission would take an entire manual. So for the purposes of this example, we will assume an unknown number of terrorists have seized a shop and its employees and customers are being held hostage.

Situational Assessment

You are given the task of planning the assault should it become necessary. You must formulate a plan quickly in case a rapid response is needed. But before you can plan, you will need intelligence on the situation and the shop. Taking action without intelligence will lead to dead hostages. Only if the terrorists actually begin killing hostages should you risk storming the shop without intelligence and a well-rehearsed plan.

The first thing you should do is locate blueprints of the shop. Is there an underground exit? Is there a door on the roof? How many exits and where? How many rooms? Where are the stairs and lifts? Are the air ducts large enough for recon drones? Large enough for personnel?

Also check out the surrounding area. Are there suitable firing positions for your snipers? Are there suitable routes to approach the building without being observed? Can you access the shop from neighboring shops?

Once you have good details on the shop and surrounding area, you'll need to know in which room(s) the hostages and terrorists are. If all the hostages are in one room, you are likely dealing with amateurs. If they are well distributed through the building, and they are between your sniper positions and the terrorists, you are dealing with pros.

To determine these things, you will have to reconnoiter the shop, and you will have to do so without alerting the terrorists. Most times, this can be done with scanners—terrorists are rarely well-equipped enough to have scan-sensing or jamming equipment. However, there will be times when scans are ineffective (maybe they do have a jammer, or maybe they are in a structure resistant to jamming).

In this case, it's old-fashioned covert recon—with mirrors and binoculars if necessary. Another outstanding method of reconnoiter is to get someone inside if possible. If there are wounded hostages or terrorists, offer to send in unarmed medical personnel. Make sure one of your medics is with them. Another tactic can be to send in your Recon/Intel Sergeant under the guise of a negotiator. If either method is used, be sure the team member has a covert method of communicating with you from inside in case the terrorists decide not to let them back out.

Make sure anyone going in undercover is wearing lightweight MIPPA clothing—DO NOT let anyone in the building with obvious personal body

armor: you will just wind up supplying the terrorists with armor as they will surely snatch it from the personnel as soon as they get inside.

Mission Planning

Once you have the intel you need, begin your mission planning. In this scenario, mounting a simultaneous assault from as many directions as possible will be your best bet. Ideally, you will be able to enter via transporter, but only if you can do so in areas where you will be unobserved. If your team materializes under observation, they may be riddled with terrorist fire before they complete transport.

Failing transport, you'll have to go in the old-fashioned way with breaching tools. Doors and windows are the obvious choices, but through a wall or roof works very well if there is an exterior room with no hostages in it. The terrorists will be expecting entry through normal points—a wall or roof entry has a much larger surprise element.

It is almost always easier to clear a building from the top down. Gravity works for you instead of against you: your team does not tire climbing stairs, you do not have to worry about terrorist grenades rolling downstairs—or your own rolling *back* down—and roof entries usually have a good element of surprise (for example, beaming onto a roof is usually *much* easier tactically than actually beaming into the building). If you can coordinate the roof entry with a ground party forming at an exit nearest the hostages, you can sweep down and out of the building in one fell swoop.

Mission Rehearsal

If the situation runs at a stalemate for any length of time, you will have an opportunity to rehearse your assault—be sure you do. Your team will likely be supplied with holodeck facilities on your transport ship, so write the most accurate simulation possible, then conduct your assault until your timing and positioning are flawless.

If holodeck facilities are unavailable, do it the old fashioned way: build a mock up and rehearse with it. Local authorities will usually lend a hand here. If another identical or similar building is available, use it (many shops and living units are prefabricated factory units with identical layouts).

Go! Go! Go!

When called on to make the assault, do it swiftly, professionally, and just like you rehearsed it. You have to be flexible if the situation doesn't match your rehearsal, but don't improvise just for the sake of it at this point: the fewer deviations from your plan, the greater the chance of your success.

A four-man HEAT entry team blows a door in preparation for their assault. Other teams will likely enter from the rear and top if possible.

If you are going to cut power as you enter, make sure one of YOUR team is at the power console. You cannot rely on anyone outside your team for such a crucial timing element.

If breaching charges are used following a power cut, they should immediately follow the cut. The cutting of power without warning will signal the terrorists that your assault is under way, you must not give them time to react. Cutting the power will cause a moment of confusion, you must act before that moment is over. Detonate your charges and send your team members in quickly and simultaneously through all pre-planned points.

The ideal entry team will usually be four members working in two pairs so that as one of each pair advances, he can be covered by his partner. Use as many of these entry teams as you can. If you have more entry points than four-man teams, give some of the entry points up. Better to go in at fewer locations with adequate strength than string out your team too thin in a vain attempt to maximize surprise.

Stun Scenarios

If the terrorists and hostages are both susceptible to stunning with no deleterious health effects, hosing each room with a phaser on stun will be most effective. You can sort out the bad guys later. In fact, a ship's phaser can often simply stun the entire building; however, you will still need to conduct your assault methodically for the reasons below.

When stunning a room or building, you must leave a team member in every room where there are stunned victims—never declare the room clear and move on! An armored or drugged terrorist could be laying low with the hostages waiting to spring up from behind and wipe out your team or the

hostages. If stunning room by room, two team members in each entry team should be the designated "stunners" while the others have weapons set to kill in case the stun plan doesn't work as anticipated.

Also effective are stun grenades. These can be tossed into a room in advance of your party to emit an omnidirectional phaser stun burst. These also emit an extreme light/noise to disorient beings not susceptible to stuns. If phaser energy is not indicated (say, sturdy terrorists/frail hostages), conventional flash/bang grenades or chemical agents can be used.

When Stunning is Not Enough

If the circumstances don't allow phaser stuns, you must fall back on your years of training and experience in shoot/don't shoot marksmanship. Terrorists and hostages may look exactly alike, and it may come down to a split-second reaction from you.

In any HEAT operation, you can expect your use of deadly force to be governed by one of four "compromise authorities":

1. You may fire at any time you have a clear shot at an identified suspect.
2. You may fire if you are in reasonable fear of death or grave bodily harm to you or another.
3. You may fire at a designated target on command only.
4. You may not fire at any time.

While snipers often operate on compromise authority 3, your team will most likely operate on compromise authority 1 for this op. It is possible, however, that an op like this must be conducted under authority 2, which is tricky to say the least.

When entering a room where stunning will not be used, always check it carefully before declaring it clear. HEAT teams use standard Infantry house-clearing techniques, but with important differences. An Infantryman is usually fighting through a house using explosives and shooting into possible enemy hiding places in a room. On a rescue mission, you must use stun or flash/bang grenades, then enter and check hiding places without shooting. You have to be ready for instant action, though.

Once the room is clear, you yell out ,"Room Clear!", mark the room with a light disk, and—if you are using portable force fields—secure the room so no one can come in behind you. Then the other half of your entry team (which has been covering you and your partner) moves to the next room while you provide cover.

Remember as you move through the shop that hostages are unlikely to be moving about during your assault. You know the entry and travel routes of your teams, so if you see anyone moving about who is not one of yours, be ready to instantly fire.

Sorting out the Bad Guys

Once you have found the hostages, you must now sort out the good guys from the bad guys. *Always treat all hostages as potentially hostile.* It is unlikely that you will be able to account for all of the terrorists immediately, and some may have hidden themselves among the hostages.

If the siege has gone on for a long time, the hostages will be prone to the "Stockholm Syndrome". This is a psychological state where they will identify with their captors, and might not point out the terrorists in their midst. They may also be brainwashed or in some other way behaviorally altered to attack you instead of responding to you.

If you try to lead them out, you could get shot in the back, or a hidden terrorist might commit suicide with a grenade. Cover the rescued personnel, secure them, and get them to safety as fast as possible. Then you can go about identifying them and reassuring the hostages.

Omega: Intel Op

While most of the missions Omega teams conduct are highly classified, certain mission types are widely known (even if they are never publicly acknowledged by the Corps). One such is Intelligence Gathering Operations or Intel Ops. While no one will confirm or deny the use of Omega Teams in Intel Ops, this seems an appropriate section in which to cover the basics of intelligence gathering.

The purpose of reconnaissance operations is to gather military intelligence on the enemy. Under some circumstances, though, the data required pertains to the social, political, economic and technological status of an enemy, potential enemy, terrorist group, or occasionally even an ally. When these operations are conducted separate from the observation of an enemy's military, they are considered Intel Ops.

When the requirement for such operations necessitates skills for infiltration and/or possible hostile actions, then the prime candidate to perform these operations are SpecOps Teams. For this reason, most teams are trained in methods of mixing with indigenous populations and gathering information.

The conduct of Intel Ops differ slightly from Recon Ops, mostly in that the collecting asset approaches Intel gathering operations from a secretive angle, and not from a military one.

Infiltration

To collect intelligence, your team will have to enter the Op Area undetected. There are two general types of Intel Op infiltration.

Covert Infiltration usually entails a military-style entry such as an orbital parachute operation, or a near-warp transport. These types of infiltrations are conducted when the likelihood of passing your team through foreign customs or border checks is unlikely. The advantages to this method are that you do not need to rely on civilian schedules of travel or border control; passage of weapons for teams is possible; extraction craft can be readily available; and communications support is available. The primary disadvantage is that you must "sneak" into the Op Area which runs the risk of detection and makes a cover for your team hard to establish.

Overt Infiltration is the preferred method of entry. This normally involves your team entering an Op Area by usage of commercial or civilian transports, such as passenger liners. You will pass through foreign customs like normal civilians, albeit under an assumed identity. This has the advantage of giving you a credible cover. It also provides you access into area where military transports might attract unwanted attention. Overt infil has the disadvantage of restricting the weapons and field gear your team may bring in country, though. Extraction of your team may also be difficult.

Contact

This stage is very important to the success of the team. Unless your team are the first operatives to enter an Op Area, then you will likely meet up at a predetermined time and place with a contact. The contact will either be an operative already in place, or a local sympathetic to your goal. You may or may not know the identity of the contact, but the contact will always know how to approach you. The contact will provide last minute communications and instructions, logistical support like weapons and supplies, identification materials, housing arrangements, etc.

Integration

This stage normally occurs either right before or right after the contact stage. This is when your team establishes a cover and integrates with the local population. To do this effectively, you will rely on a cover for your team. A good cover has high credibility and therefore relies on a certain amount of intelligence itself (imagine having a cover of a butcher on a world of vegetarians). This is where your contact can help. Without a little bit of infor-

mation to base a cover on, you will have to observe and collect completely covertly until you have enough information to establish a cover on the spot.

Your cover will establish you either as a member of the indigenous population, or as a visitor with a credible purpose behind the visit. If you are to pass as a local, you will usually require surgical alteration to disguise your appearance. You will also have to know the language as translators will be a dead giveaway. Once disguised, you can "replace" a local individual, assuming their identity through various means. This type of operation is very risky, and is usually reserved for Intelligence operatives. Alternatively you can assume an identity of a member of the local population, but new to that particular community. Use care here also: many people will be wary of a newcomer until you can establish a rapport with them and win them over.

If you go into an Op Area as yourselves, say under the premise of being vacationers or businessmen, your cover will be easier to maintain. However, you may have an even bigger trust gap to overcome with the locals. An age old Intelligence tactic is to place team members as embassy employees, however this tactic can be very transparent.

Collection

The collection stage is the actual gathering of intelligence. It is done by any method feasible, however, care must be taken not to expose the fact that information has been collected. This would normally preclude harming of foreign peoples or the theft of property. Therefore, you will be limited mostly to passive gathering: recording ELINT, video or holographic photography, information gleaned from conversations with contacts and locals, etc.

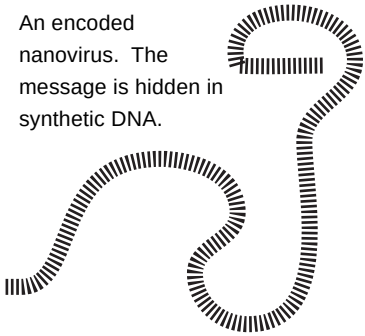
Reporting

Reporting can be the most dangerous part of the mission. As you collect your Intel, you will record all pertinent information into a storage device that you will keep well hidden. When reporting, you will need to do something with the recorded information. There are three primary methods of reporting recorded information.

Contact is the method wherein information is handed directly to a contact, messenger or embassy official. For this you will have to have the information on you, sometimes for an extended period, so use care. A variation of this method is the *Dead Drop* in which you place the material in a predetermined location so another operative can pick it up later.

Burst Transmission can be useful in some situations, but exposes your team to a larger risk of detection. Here, information is relayed to an orbiting ship

by burst transmission from a Special Operations DBA set. With slight modifications, planetary communications assets can be used for this if a safe method of doing so can be found.



An encoded nanovirus. The message is hidden in synthetic DNA.

Data Extraction involves encoding information into a small device and smuggling it out of the Op Area. The latest trend in data extraction comes from a variation of Borg nanotechnology, where data is placed into a nanovirus, and injected directly into your blood stream for later extraction by Federation Medical personnel.

Exfiltration and Debriefing

Simply stated, exfiltration is when the team leaves the Op Area, normally by the same way they came. Once back in friendly territory, the team can be thoroughly debriefed—usually by a group consisting of representatives from higher headquarters, SFMC Military Intelligence, and STARFLEET Intelligence. It may also include allied Intelligence operatives.

The debriefing can be the most important part of any Intel Op. Your team will be interviewed—both conventionally and under hypnosis—on all aspects of the mission from start to finish. Less attention is placed on the data reported (after all, they already have a copy of that) and more on the actual events surrounding the operation. The hypnotic interview will search for subliminal information gathered by your subconscious and/or details you have trouble recalling consciously.

Pararescue: Picking Up the Aircrew

By far the most common mission for Pararescue teams are picking up stranded or injured aircrews from remote areas after an unexpected departure from their aerospace craft or shuttle. This is usually due to an ejection or emergency transport—at the airspeeds and operating ceilings of most of these craft, very few crashes yield survivors.

To make pick up, Pararescue Teams fly modified S-34 Valor Strategic Medivac Aerospace Craft. With more complex navigation systems, beefier shields, a higher top speed and an advanced transporter system, the MS-34 Pave Valor is a truly cutting edge Pararescue vehicle. In fact, the Pave Valor

has so advanced the state of the art in its profession, that it has nearly eliminated the accuracy of the "Para" in "Pararescue".

Rescue Jumping

As good as the Pave Valor is, there are times when even the MS-34's sensors and transporters can't track down an entire aircrew, and there are times when the terrain they are stranded in is so broken that no nearby landing areas can be found. It may also be that the aircrew is down in enemy territory and the Pave Valor can't afford to loiter. This is when the rescue jumpers earn their keep.

The basic goal of the rescue jumpers is to treat wounded aircrew members and/or find lost ones, then to arrange swift pick up for the crew and themselves by the Pave Valor. If weather or other interference is wreaking havoc on transporters, the rescue jumpers may have to sustain the survivors for long periods while waiting for it to clear. Alternatively, they may need to get the survivors to a clear landing area for physical pickup if matter transport is altogether eliminated.

Planning the Rescue

In most cases you will have very little time to formulate a plan. Pararescue teams operate on the smallest amount of information of any SpecOps team. Often, all you have are planetary coordinates to go by. The type of terrain, condition and number of survivors, and enemy presence will all be unknowns until you arrive on scene. Still, anticipate as many contingencies as possible. All team members should be hovering over long range scanner displays to pick out possible LZs and DZ around the coordinates.

Communications

Stay in touch with the aircrew on the emergency frequency if possible to determine their condition and location. Are they spread out? What landmarks are around them? Are there injuries? If so, what is their nature and severity? Can they detect any enemy activity? Etc. Also stay in touch with the rescue dispatching group to get updates on enemy activity, weather, and other up-to-the-minute intelligence.

Finding the Survivors

The MS-34 has a fantastic sensor suite which should be able to pinpoint the survivors before you even arrive at the crash/ejection site. However, enemy jamming or natural interference can inhibit this unit. Then it's back to visual scanning (and hopefully some helpful directions from the survivors on the radio).

If the situation is a crash, locate the wreckage first, it will be easier to spot

than individual survivors who will be nearby. If dealing with an ejection, look for the cockpit capsule. It should have a beacon to home on, but in enemy territory the survivors may disable the beacon to prevent Threat forces from homing on it. If you are looking for crew members emergency transported into the area, you have no choice but to look for individual survivors. Keep your eyes constantly scanning the terrain. Use your peripheral vision to detect movement. Look for light flashes, smoke or other signals.

When you finally locate the survivors, mark their position with a TDRS-28 target designator. This will give your team a tachyon signal to base operations on. It will also automatically communicate the exact position to the Pave Valor's computer which will lock it on the pilot's visor display and will radio it back to base.

Getting Down

If there is no suitable LZ for the Pave Valor and transporters are being jammed or interfered with, you'll have to jump down to the survivors. Very rarely will this drop have to be made from orbit, so you will be dealing with a standard free-fall parachute operation.

However, when making a jump into broken country, you must do so with extreme caution or the next rescue mission will be for you. Make the jump at as low an altitude as is safe. Being off course from your landing site by more than a degree or two can leave you with insurmountable obstacles between you and the survivors. If possible, use an antigrav decelerator for at least the last 10 meters of your jump to avoid injury on landing. Steer your rig to the flattest area possible and land with great care.

Immediately stow or destroy your chute (based on circumstances) and link up with other rescue jumpers on secure I-LINK. Check that all jumpers reached their targets without injury, then set out after your survivors.

Treating the Wounded

To be certified as a rescue jumper, you must be a SpecOp medic or surgeon. Now you'll find out why: Even a flawless ejection can produce devastating casualties, not to mention the effects of a crash. Also, your survivors may have already had to engage enemy patrols and may have suffered combat casualties. Finally, they may have received injuries prior to leaving their craft from combat or mechanical damage. In any case, you are likely to face casualties among the survivors.

Stabilize them as quickly as possible—the fact that you had to jump in indicates a strong probability that the patient will have to be moved and

soon. Transport is unlikely if you are on the ground treating him. In your rucksack will be two or three portable antigrav stretcher assemblies which can make moving the survivors easier. Enlist the help of the uninjured or mildly injured. It will give them something to focus on as well.

Gathering the Survivors

Once casualties have been stabilized, you'll need to gather all the survivors together and move out. Wherever you are is not likely to be the place you'll be staying. Move at the fastest pace you can without further injury to personnel.

If you will be waiting for the return of your MS-34 to beam you up (when interference clears or enemy activity allows their return), move to the nearest shelter and set up camp. If you are not behind enemy lines, activate your transponder for your Pave Valor to home on and/or set up orbital communications on your DBA terminal. If enemy activity is likely, you will need to more carefully select your waiting point to make sure it is defensible as well as providing adequate shelter. This will also limit your comm.

If you need to get the survivors to an LZ for your MS-34, choose your route carefully. The shortest one may not be suitable for your injured charges. Pick out the most negotiable route to the designated LZ and set out as a patrol. If behind enemy lines, put armed rescue jumpers on point and in scouting positions to make sure the route and your LZ are clear of enemy activity. If the LZ turns out to be hot, scout out another one and communicate the change to your pilot via DBA.

Making Pickup

If making pickup by transporter, the MS-34s unit should be able to pick up your entire party simultaneously. Even through the Pave Valor's transporter only has four pads, it has an enormous pattern buffer which allows it to extract up to 30 humanoids at once, and then rematerialize them in sets of four once safely aboard the craft.

If you have to physically load the survivors aboard the Pave Valor, do so as quickly and orderly as possible. Send the survivors who can still walk with a team member to the side hatch, while other team members load the stretchers through the clam shell doors. If you are fortunate enough not to have stretchers, send the whole group through the clam shells and get the hell out of there.

Should the enemy attack while you are loading up, your door gunners can keep them pinned down with the Pave Valor's heavy phasers and 15mm projectile weapons. Other team members can cover the loading with light

weapons as well. Hopefully, the Pave Valor will have air escort to suppress ground fire as well, but this is not always the case. Whatever the circumstances, all you can do is get everyone aboard ASAP.

Once safely aboard and on the way back to base you can start detailed treatment of casualties with the Pave Valor's extensive medical facilities. For cases too extreme for the MS-34's equipment, there are four stasis tubes aboard to keep their condition from deteriorating en route.

Recon: Catching a Train

Normally, the tasks of Special Operations units are covert and hidden. There are certain exceptions to this like HEAT and Pararescue Teams, however the main agenda for SpecOps is conducted in the shadows. Occasionally, though, this mission is changed. Teams sometimes are ordered to utilize their special training to conduct operations directly against an enemy force. This is known as Direct Action, and the teams that are most often assigned Direct Action missions are Recon Teams.

There are several types of DA missions carried out by Recon Teams such as *raids* (deliberate attacks conducted against a specific target for the purpose of securing it or attaining an objective); *combat patrols* (infantry operations that teams' often participate in to harass an enemy and keep him disorganized deep in his own territory); and *ambushes* (raids against moving targets). For our tactical example of a Recon Team Direct Action, we will be using an ambush of a mag lev train which is carrying critical supplies deep behind enemy lines.

Ambushes are intentional pre-positioned surprise attacks conducted against personnel, vehicles or ships on the move. They are characterized by four distinct stages: 1) clandestine insertion; 2) brief, violent combat; 3) rapid disengagement; and 4) swift, deceptive withdrawal.

Organizing your Ambush

Your ambush party will have two basic elements—an assault group and a security group. The assault group will conduct the actual operation itself (in this case destroying the train). In this example, your assault group should contain your demolition experts and at least some of your heavy weapons experts. The security group is there to protect them, to secure the area and stop enemy reinforcements from becoming involved in the action, to stop any would-be escapers, and to cover the withdrawal of the assault group. Although objective, terrain, equipment, enemy defenses, and weather will

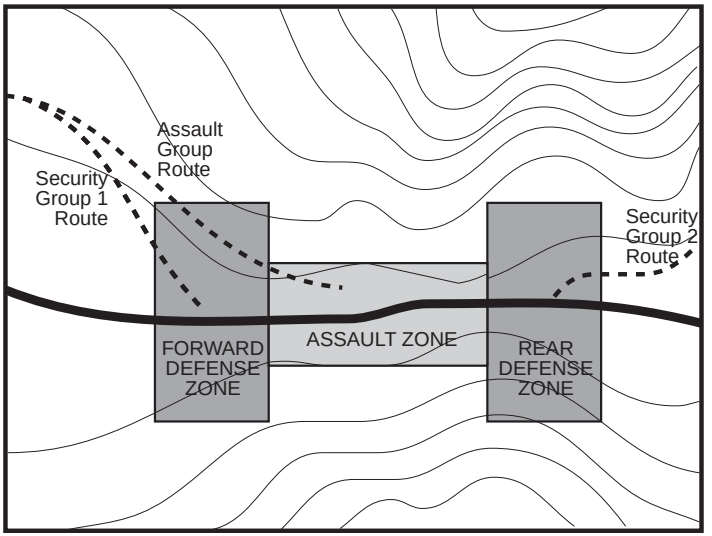
all affect the organization of your party, a good rule of thumb is to set your security group at about twice the size of your assault group.

Planning: Keep it Simple

Although it should be accurate down to the last detail, the plan should be essentially simple. If success depends on a large number of factors coming together at the right time, any one of them going wrong will probably blow the entire operation.

Location. Set the ambush in a site you can move into and out of unobserved. That usually means a remote section of track or tube, which works out perfectly since you want to be far from reinforcements and repair personnel. Try to pick a main section of tube or track that will also hold up following rail traffic substantially. Avoid attacking on a siding or spur line. If given the choice, make sure it is an area where enemy forces have to bunch up, making it easy to address a counterattack if one comes. Also try for a steep valley or ravine that makes enemy air support difficult.

Time. Working in the dark is almost always preferable, so schedule your attack for night. If you can get into the area, attack, and withdraw all under cover of darkness, by all means do so. However, you may have to move in one night, then attack and withdraw the next. Of course, in this instance, your timing will be dictated by the arrival of the train into the kill zone you have selected. If you're lucky you'll find a suitable kill zone which will coincide with a night arrival. If you must attack during daylight, try for the end of the day. Dusk is a great time for withdrawal since you have the benefit of the last minutes of daylight to exit the immediate Op Area, and



An oversimplified diagram of the ambush scenario. The thin topographical lines show a natural pass between two high rock structures. Natural choke points at the exit and entrance make this an ideal assault zone. The boxes show the approximate area of responsibility of each group.

darkness to slow down the enemy pursuit.

Intelligence. As with any other operation, good intelligence is important to success of the mission. However, you and your team will have to be flexible: the best intelligence in the world can't predict the enemy's operational delays, so you may be in position for some time before being able to carry out your assault.

Stopping the Train

Once the assault group is in the immediate Op Area, split up your group and begin to take positions. Your demolition expert(s) and some covering operators should make for the track/tube section in question and plant their charges. Remember, you may be in position for some time, so hide your explosives well in case there are patrols or maintenance crews about. If you will detonate by wire, lay your wire along an indirect path following natural features or fence lines; a path of disturbed vegetation from the track/tube to your position across an open field will be easily spotted from the air. Remember to use plenty of chloromask spray also, since the chlorophyll from crushed vegetation will show on IR scans. If you are detonating by wireless remote, be aware of RF hazard: your charges could be prematurely detonated by a radio transmission near your demolition circuit. You could avoid the problem altogether by using safety fuses, but this is not always tactically appropriate. The site from which you detonate should be in good cover, overlooking the target, and far enough away to be safe from the effects of the blast. They should also be well clear of your fire support team's kill zones.

While the explosives are being planted, position your heavy weapons. Make sure they have clear fields of fire to the rear of the explosives position. Establish kill zones/boxes for each weapon so there is no unnecessary overlap of fires. Make sure the fire support group is in effective range for all of its weapons. It may be necessary to clear vegetation from fields of fire, but don't remove too much or it will be noticed. A generous helping of chloromask is called for here as well. While this is being accomplished, your security group should already be in position up-track and down-track from you to assure your free fire zone remains uncompromised.

When the train finally arrives, blow the track/tube when the train is in the optimal position with regard to the explosives point. This is usually just as the locomotive reaches the charges, but may be different for your particular mission. Activate both the primary and backup detonation circuits simultaneously—don't wait for a failure. Your heavy weapons will then engage the train to assure its destruction. Light weapons covering fire can take care of anyone disembarking the train.

While all this is happening, parts of your security element will be removing sections of track/tube in both directions from the kill zone to prevent reinforcements from arriving unexpectedly. Even so, the fire from your weapons and explosives should be furious and concentrated. If it takes much more than five minutes to destroy the train, you are in trouble. Reinforcements may arrive from the air, or may be transported into the area any time.

Withdrawal

During mission planning, you selected an FRV (Final Rendez Vous) point for your withdrawal. The FRV should be an easily recognizable and defensible position a few hundred meters away on the inward route to the target. You will withdraw here to regroup before you move off after the ambush. Leave it secure with an FRV party, who will also provide you with rear protection. Leave a cache of weapons and ammo here as well.

If you are attacked, you may have to withdraw to your FRV point under fire. You should get away fast using fire and maneuver tactics. Discourage the enemy from following you by liberal use of CDM, minimikes and other booby traps. Make sure everyone knows the safe route out! Part of your security element may have to draw the enemy pursuit away from the main force if necessary.

Ship Seizure:

To the great dismay of the Federation, the task of taking a STARFLEET vessel *back* from an enemy force is becoming a painfully common mission for Ship Seizure teams lately. Despite advances in security, starships in remote or border areas are more vulnerable than ever to capture...especially by the technically advanced Jem Hadar and Cardassians. These forces have their own highly capable ship seizure teams, which forces the SFMC special operators into the role of counter-seizure: the thrust of our tactical lesson here.

Seizure and counter-seizure tactics are very similar to HEAT tactics for compartment clearing and fire and maneuver—especially in the counter-seizure role when friendly forces may still be aboard. This can be very similar to a hostage crisis.

Preparation

You will likely be responding to a counter-seizure crisis rapidly and with little advanced intelligence, much the same way a Pararescue Team must

respond when called. However, you have an advantage in counter-seizure that the Pararescue team does not: you KNOW the territory you will be operating in. You will have practiced time and time again on all manner of Federation starships, so you will know exactly where you're going and how you'll get there. The only variables will be the size and sophistication of the force holding the ship, and where they have put hostages if they have them.

Catching Up

Sometimes the most difficult part of a counter-seizure operation can be catching up to the stolen ship. They generally have a massive head start on you, and fancy navigation may be needed more than raw speed to catch them.

Some teams even "transporter hop" through a series of ships and installations spaced at maximum transporter range to advance themselves into the general Op Area. The problem with this method is that the last ship you wind up on may not be the one you were hoping for to catch up to the stolen vessel. In the meantime, hopefully, naval forces have been able to engage the stolen vessel at least well enough to slow it down.

Since catching a stolen vessel is sometimes impossible for a team starting from deep in friendly territory, many SFMC Ship Seizure Teams are stationed in border areas and other "hot spots".

Command Overrides

A less sophisticated adversary may overlook the starship's Command Override codes, or may not know how to reprogram them. If this is the case, it makes your job much easier. You may simply have to override the ship's bridge controls, stop the vessel, and flood the decks with anesthezine gas.

Unfortunately, it is almost *never* this simple.

It seems terrorists and threat forces learn about anesthezine gas in grade school, and are almost always prepared for it. And most any force capable of taking a STARFLEET vessel is capable of defeating the Command Override subroutines. This shouldn't force you to give up on the Command Overrides though. If your team fields a capable datawarfare specialist, they may be able to force their way into the system and subtly override commands before the enemy can stop them.

Getting Aboard

Boarding a ship that is prepared for your arrival is extraordinarily difficult and usually results in high casualties. Therefore, most ship seizure opera-

tions will be conducted when the enemy is incapable of solid resistance or is unaware of the team's approach. Neither one of these eventualities is likely in a counter-seizure op, though. They will be waiting for an attempt to retake the ship. And if they have hostages aboard, engaging them ship-to-ship until they are beaten down enough to lose shields will guarantee a dead STARFLEET crew when you arrive.

Fortunately, you have advance knowledge of shield modulations which you can capitalize on. You can use the highly-classified (but available to you) shield regeneration cycle as a transporter window to insert your team. Even if the enemy has remodulated the shields, your datawarfare tech should still be able to access the regeneration sequence when he gains access to the system. There are classified safeguards in place to assure he can do this.

You will already know where to insert your team. This will vary by type of vessel, but usually will include the Emergency/Battle Bridge and/or CIC. From here you can override the Main Bridge (where most Threat forces will concentrate their defenses). For the same reason, your secondary team will likely enter Impulse Engineering rather than Main Engineering.

If hostages are held and you have team members to spare, beam some into areas where they can secure the hostages quickly without being seen during transport. Remember, though, that your mission is to save the ship, first. You are not a HEAT team (although you *may* be working with one).

The transport cycle will be your most vulnerable time: if you are observed, you could be riddled with fire before you fully materialize. If possible, beam in stun grenades or flash/bang grenades in ahead of you—but timing must be perfect. Your target coordinates should always be behind suitable cover, and you should transport "weapons hot" and in firing positions.

Taking Over

As soon as you are capable of firing, remove your opposition. Secure the room you are assigned to, and start working on the ship's systems. You can worry about the rest of the ship and the hostages *after* you have control of the ship's key systems. Contrary to popular belief, your first priority is *not* navigation or even engines; it is the internal security system. Once you have control of this, you can lock enemy forces into the compartments they are in, use anesthezine, disable weapons, erect force fields, etc. Remember, you must neutralize the enemy force before you truly control the ship.

If you fail to gain control of the internal security system, you will have to clear the ship of the enemy compartment by compartment as in normal Infantry clearing operations. This is time consuming and can lead to

casualties. Every effort should be made to control the security system first.

Once you have neutralized the enemy threat, you can slowly retake the ship's systems. After Internal Security, your priorities should be:

- ***IWS.*** Get control of the Integrated Weapons System and disable the shields. This will allow your reinforcements in if necessary, and will allow ship-to-ship engagement should you fail to win the ship from inside. Disable weapons and targeting systems too to prevent the enemy from fighting back with what systems they do control.

- ***Propulsion.*** With the enemy threat neutralized internally and externally, the next step is to stop the ship.

- ***Life support.*** You had gross control of this function through the internal security system, but now you can fine tune your control to include cutting off atmosphere to enemy occupied compartments while maintaining it in hostage-filled ones. Your team are experts at zero-g fighting, so immediately disable the artificial gravity as soon as possible.

These are the bare minimum systems to hold if you must subsequently fight your way through the ship. However, once you have these systems, you are usually in control and may retake the entire ship at your leisure.

A Word on Hostages

It sounds callous, but STARFLEET crews—even their on-board families if applicable—knew the risks when they signed on. When it comes to a vessel falling into enemy hands, they are expendable, and so are you. Your first priority is the ship. If you are lucky enough to be working with a HEAT team, they can worry about the hostages. If you have no HEAT support and no team members to spare, then the hostages will have to take their chances while you take the ship. If you can't regain control of the ship, you may be forced to destroy it, no matter who is left on board.

Compartment clearing is just like room clearing. If hostages are aboard you must use HEAT clearing techniques. Remember, though, that your first priority is to take the ship back. Hostages are a secondary concern for you.

Glossary

Here is a list of common terms, abbreviations and acronyms that appear in this manual. There may be some references to terms that are common to the SFMC, but are not listed in this glossary. Those terms should be listed in the Marine Force Manual or in other relevant Branch Guidebooks.

Aerospace - 1. A planet's atmosphere and the space outside of it, considered as one continuous field. 2. Things that are designed for flight in aerospace. 3. The combat arm that deploys aerospace vehicles, such as fighters. 4. The aerospace vehicles of a combat force.

Airborne Operation - To insert troops via parachute. Historically referred only to operations from air to land, but now also refers to operations where troops are launched/dropped from orbit to planet-side.

Alpine - Relating to mountanous terrain.

Amphibious - Relating to or organized for a military landing by means of combined naval and land forces. Historically referred only to operations from water to land, but now also refers to ops from orbit to planet-side.

Antigrav/Antigravity - A method of propulsion or lifting that uses an antigraviton generator to counteract the normal effects of gravity.

Antipersonnel - Designed specifically to inflict death or bodily injury rather than material destruction.

Armor - 1. A defensive covering worn to protect the body against weapons. 2. A tough, protective covering, such as metallic plates or composite panels on tanks or warships. 3. The combat arm that deploys armored vehicles. 4. The armored vehicles of a ground force (includes tanks and self-propelled artillery in the case of the SFMC).

Battalion - In the SFMC, 3-4 companies plus HQ (typically 400 to 600 persons).

Battle Damage Assessment - Evaluation of the success of an assault on a target. Usually used to describe the assessment of damage inflicted by aerospace craft or naval gunfire on ground targets.

Branch - A group of related jobs within the Starfleet Marine Corps. There are eight branches of duty within the SFMC: Aerospace, Armor, Combat Engineers, Infantry, Mecha, Medical, Special Operations, and Support.

Brigade - In the SFMC, 3-4 battalions plus HQ (typically 1500 to 2400 persons).

Butt - The very endpiece of a rifle that contacts the shoulder of the user when in proper firing position. *See also "stock".*

Calibre - The diameter of the bore of a firearm, shown today in millimeters.

Camouflage - 1. The method or result of concealing personnel or equipment from an enemy by making them appear to be part of the natural surroundings. 2. The use of physical, as opposed to electronic or holographic, camouflage.

Carbine - A lightweight rifle with a short barrel.

Centimeter - One one-hundreth of a meter. There are about 2.6cm in an inch.

Cloaking Technology - Any system designed to render persons or objects "invisible"; usually by selective manipulation of light rays.

Colonial Marines - One of several historical Marine organizations that evolved into the present day SFMC.

Company - In SpecOps, equivalent to an MSG and made of 8 teams.

Crypto - Relating to cryptography or cryptographic materials. Generally describes codes and code keys for secure communications.

Datafighter - Term used in the SpecOps community to describe a Datawarfare Specialist.

Deflector Shield - Standard defense field for starships, based on the ability to alter gravitational effects across a plane perpendicular to the incoming threat. Deflector shields do not function safely or effectively inside a planetary atmosphere.

Direct Fire - A method of weapon employment where line of sight must exist between the firing weapon and it's target.

Dispersion - The tendency of para-dropped troops or materials to spread out in a line as they exit the drop craft over time.

Duranium - Extremely hard metal alloy used extensively in starship construction, armor, and projectiles.

Electronic Countermeasures (ECM) - Measure to counteract enemy sensing and targeting attempts through jamming, misinformation and distortion of their sensor signals.

Effective Range - In weapon systems, the distance at which the average operator can place the majority of shots on target. *See also "maximum range".*

Eloflage - Any type of electronic measures or countermeasures designed to camouflage something.

Energy Signature - The particular pattern of energy emitted by a device which can be detected by enemy sensors. Antigravs have a particularly strong and characteristic energy signature.

Entry Team - A formation of four operators who move in pairs by cover and maneuver when entering a ship or sturcture.

Eugenics Wars - Devastating wars that took place in Earth's history, as genetically engineered humans (who believed themselves superior to non-engineered humans) tried to conquer the world.

Exotic Atmosphere - Any non-Class-M atmosphere that is composed of hominid-toxic, corrosive or high pressure gases.

Flare - In infantry applications, an incendiary illumination device to provide a lighted field of view during night operations. *See also "Powered Flare".*

Flash/Bang - A hand or launched nonlethal grenade which emits a blinding flash and deafening bang to disorient an enemy.

Force Field - A defensive technology, consisting of an energized field that protects a target by deflecting, diverting or absorbing a certain amount of energy per millisecond. Sometimes inaccurately referred to as "shields".

Grand Luxe - The month-long final examination field exercise at BASS. The name is an intentional irony in relation to the conditions of the test.

Grip - On a hand-held weapon, the portion or portions by which the operator holds the weapon with his hands.

Guerilla - 1. Any member of a small defensive force of irregular soldiers, usually volunteers, making surprise raids, especially behind the lines of an invading enemy army. 2. Warfare carried on by guerillas.

Hardened - Term used to describe a building or fortification that has been constructed to resist damage from enemy weapons. This can be done by improving the design, using stronger materials etc.

Heater - Term used in the SpecOps community to describe a HEAT team member.

Heavy Weapons - Weapons designed to engage vehicles or equivalent hardened targets, or to affect a large area with a single attack. Often requires a special mount or firing platform and more than one person to operate.

Holoflage - The use of hologram generation for the purpose of camouflage.

Hominid - Historically, a primate of the family Hominidae, of which Homo sapiens is the only extant species. Today used interchangeably with "humanoid" to describe beings which are terran-like in appearance.

Humanoid - See "hominid".

In Country - Refers to being in a foreign state for the purpose of conducting operations. Forces may by in country covertly or overtly.

Indirect Fire - Fire from artillery, mortars, rockets, or similar weapons of a ballistic or semi-ballistic nature. The projectile does not travel a straight path and so a direct line of sight to the target is not needed.

Inertial Dampening Field - A force field generator which provides a measured push in the direction opposite the thrust of a ship or weapon to cancel out intertial forces.

Infectious Component - A computer component which contains a computer virus burned into it.

Intel - Short for 'intelligence' (of the military variety).

Kilogram - Standard measurement for weight used in the metric system. One kilogram is 1000 grams, or about 2.2 pounds.

Kilometer - Standard measurement for distance used in the metric system. A kilometer is 1000 meters, or about 0.6 miles.

Kiloton - Standard measurement for explosive force. It is equal to the explosive force of 1000 tons of conventional TNT explosive.

Light Weapons - Man-portable weapons designed primarily to engage individual personnel targets or very small vehicles.

Man Portable - Something designed to be carried by one Marine.

Manpack - A man-portable system designed to be carried in a pack, usually on the back. It must usually be unpacked before use.

Marine Occupational Specialty (MOS) - The job or function which the individual Marine is trained to do. Groups of related MOSs are called Branches.

Maximum Range - In weapon systems, the maximum distance a shot will travel if it hits nothing else in flight. For Infantry weapons, it is usually expressed in terms of a Class M atmosphere/gravity.

MegaCorporations - Huge industrial conglomerates of the 21st century, responsible for much of Earth's early colonization efforts and rebuilding of civilization after the Eugenics Wars. Funded the Colonial Marines.

Meter - Measure of distance, the standard on which the metric system is based. One meter equals 39 inches, or one yard plus three inches.

Millimeter - One one-thousandth of a meter. About the thickness of a 20th century U.S. dime.

Mission - 1. A special assignment given to a person or group. 2. A combat operation assigned to a person or military unit. 3. An aerospace operation intended to carry out specific program objectives.

Muzzle - The end of the barrel of a projectile weapon through which the projectile leaves. Also, the emitter crystal end of an energy weapon.

Nanosecond - One billionth of a second.

New Valley Forge - The star system which contains TRACOM headquarters

and most of its large training facilities. It's exact location is classified.

Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) - Refers collectively to pay grades E-4 through E-9 (corporal through sergeant major). These are enlisted personnel who lead other subordinate enlisted personnel.

Omnidirectional - In all directions simultaneously.

Op or *Ops* - Short for operation(s).

Op Area - Short for Operating Area, the area in which the team will be operating to accomplish their mission.

Operator - Generic term for a member of the SpecOps Branch.

Pave - A term used to describe an aerospace craft specially equipped to conduct SpecOps missions. The term is usually placed just ahead of the craft's normal name.

Power Cell - An advanced form of battery, used to power small electronic devices and weapons.

Prolonged Fire - The practice of keeping a steady phaser beam firing on a target for a prolonged period. Akin to automatic projectile weapons fire in tactical use and results.

Rappel - The act or method of descending from a mountainside or cliff by means of a belayed rope that is passed under one thigh and over the opposite shoulder so that it can be payed out smoothly and gradually.

Rebreather - A respirator unit which reclaims oxygen from the exhaled gases for further inhalation by the wearer.

Rodinium - One of the hardest metals known to Federation science. Outposts along the Romulan Neutral Zone were constructed of cast Rodinium.

Run-through - The effect of a high energy projectile or beam travelling completely through its intended target.

Sensor Signature - The signal or emissions that personnel or vehicles give off, which can be detected by enemy sensing devices. This can be heat, electromagnetic, acoustic or some other form of energy.

Shotgun - A chemically-fired, smooth-bored projectile weapon used for firing a charge of shot (small projectiles) or other projectile over a short distance.

Sniper - A skilled military shooter detailed to spot and pick off enemy soldiers from a concealed place.

Special Operations - Any operation that is not considered routine, common or standard when speaking of the SFMC as a whole. Often referred to as 'unconventional warfare'.

Spotter - One who observes friendly fire for fire control purposes.

Stick - A line of paratroops as they leave the drop craft.

Stock - In a hand-held weapon, the portion placed against the shoulder for stabilization.

Stun Grenade - A hand or launched grenade containing an omnidirectional phaser emitter which fires a single pulse of stunning phaser energy.

Strategic - Important or essential in relation to a plan of action; essential to the effective conduct of war; highly important to an intended objective. Usually refers to a longer term plan or view of a military situation.

Tactical - Of, relating to, used in, or involving military operations that are smaller, closer to base, and of less long-term significance than strategic operations. Usually refers to the immediate plan and situation rather than the long-term goals and picture of the strategic operation.

Team - The basic maneuver unit of the SpecOps branch, usually consisting of 8 to 16 operators.

Threat - Collectively describes any of a number of adversarial or potentially adversarial forces.

Tracer - A weapon that, intentionally or unintentionally, marks the path of its fire (usually chemically or electronically) so that its operator can see it.

Transatmospheric - Travelling from atmosphere to space or vice-versa.

Transponder - A transmitter-receiver activated for transmission by reception of a predetermined signal.

Unidirectional - In only one direction.

United Nations Peace Force - Military forces of the United Nations, charged with peacekeeping duties and defense of Earth against aggressors.

Waypoint - A landmark by which a pilot can update his position.

Guide to Acronyms

Here is a list of commonly used acronyms in this manual. Entries followed by an asterisk have a separate glossary entry. Other terms are covered in detail in their respective manual sections.

BASS - BAsic Specops School

BATCO - BATtle COde

BDA* - Battle Damage Assessment

BDU - Battle Dress Uniform

BSS - Battlefield Surveillance System

C3 - Command, Control, Communications

CDM - Conductive Droplet Munition

CEMS - Combat Electronics Management System

CI - Chief Instructor

CIA - Central Intelligence Agency (of Old Earth)

cm* - centimeter

CoC - Chain of Command

CPU - Central Processing Unit (of a computer)

CQB - Close-Quarter Battle

DZ - Drop Zone

ECM* - Electronic CounterMeasures

ELINT - ELectronic INTelligence

EM - ElectroMagnetic

EMPW - ElectroMagnetic Projectile Weapon

EOD - Explosive Ordnance Disposal

EPROM - Erasable Programmable Read Only Memory

ESR - Extremely Short Range

EXCHEG - Extreme Conditions Hazardous Environment Garment (pronounced “ex-cheg”)

FA - Foreign Assistance

FACTS - Forward Aerospace Control and Tactical Support

FLIR - Forward-Looking InfraRed

FRV - Final Rendez Vous

FS - Fire Support

GOEIS - Ground Offensive Electronic Interdiction System (pronounced “goes”)

HALO - High-Altitude, Low-Opening (pronounced “hay low”)

HEAT - Hostage Extraction and Antiterrorist Tactics

HQ - HeadQuarters

IC* - Infectious Component

ID - Indentification

IDF* - Inertial Dampening Field

I-LINK - Individual communications Link

IR - InfraRed

IV - Intra-Venous (usually refers to fluids administered intravenously)

IWS - Integrated Weapons System

kg* - kilogram

km* - kilometer

kph - kilometers per hour

kt* - kiloton

LOLO - Low-Orbit, Low-Opening (pronounced “low-low”)

LW* - Light Weapons

LZ - Landing Zone

m*- meter

MAPLIML - MAn Portable Light Infantry Missile Launcher (usually called “mapper”)

MARDET - MARine DETachment

MIPPA - Marine Infantry Personal Protective Armor (pronounced “mippa”)

MOS* - Marine Occupational Specialty

mm* - millimeter

m/s - meters per second

MSG - Marine Strike Group

NBC - Nuclear, Biological, & Chemical

NCO* - Noncommissioned Officer

NVF* - New Valley Forge

OIC - Officer In Charge

OJT - On the Job Training

OSS - Office of Special Services (of Old Earth)

PADD - Personal Access Display Device

POC - Passive Observation Collector

POW - Prisoner Of War

PT - Physical Training

RF - Radio Frequency

RDF - Rapid Deployment Force

SAC - Sensor-Absorbent Coating

SAS - Special Air Service (of Old Earth)

SAW - Squad Automatic Weapon (pronounced “saw”)

SEAL - SEa, Air, Land (of Old Earth)

SFMC - StarFleet Marine Corps

SM - Subprocessing Module

SOC - Special Operations Capable

SWG - Special Warfare Group

THEOG - Thermal Hazardous Environment Overgarment (pronounced “thug”)

TIS - Threat Information System

TST - Team Specific Training

TVD - Through-Visor Display

UFP - United Federation of Planets

UN* - United Nations

UNPF* - United Nations Peace Forces

UNPFMC - United Nations Peace Forces Marine Corps

US - United States

USMC - United States Marine Corps

UV - Ultra Violet

Designer's Notes

Before we get into talking about this manual, I hope you read the Infantry manual before this one. If you didn't and you feel like you're missing something, you are! SpecOps is based heavily on Infantry gear and doctrine, and much of what went into this manual is based on that other manual. I didn't want to take up space in this book covering what I already went over in the last book.

That being said, I hope you liked what you read. Material for this manual came from a wide range of sources, including Marc Harris and Mike Davis. Thanks guys, I couldn't have done it without you, and I'm sorry I couldn't use EVERYTHING you gave me (this book would have been twice this size if I had).

If you are or have been a special operator in the real world, my hat is off to you. If there's one thing I took away from researching this manual it's that operators do things I could never imagine doing myself. While we'd all like to role-play that we're some tough hombres, these guys really are—and we ALL owe them our gratitude for doing what they do for us. And hey, guys, if you really are an operator and I have just totally botched something in this book, please tell me. I am not above revisions and corrections!

I look forward to your comments, CONSTRUCTIVE criticisms, ideas, suggestions, questions and even complaints about this book. It will mean someone read it anyway (grin). But seriously, we are always looking for ways to improve, and you can help us more than anyone by reading and using the book and then telling us what you think, so please do!

In the meantime, keep on reading!

Semper Fi,
COL Kevin McNulty
COTRACOM

About SFMC Academy

The Starfleet Marine Corps Academy was established by Commander Starfleet in 2164 when it was determined that Starfleet Academy could no longer adequately meet the needs of both services. The historical home of the United States' Navy and Marine Corps academies, Annapolis, was selected as the new home of the SFMCA. The head of the Academy, known as Director SFMCA, is still headquartered at the main campus in Annapolis.

The motto of the SFMCA is "Facta Non Verba" or, in Federation Standard, "Deeds not Words." This is reflected in the more informal academy slogan, "We lead by example... whether we mean to or not."

The Director SFMCA reports to the Commanding Officer of the Training Command (COTRACOM) who, in addition to the SFMCA, oversees branch schools, enlisted personnel training, advanced technical schools, and periodic skill refresher courses. Most of these courses are held either at one of the SFMCA facilities, or at one of the many training facilities in the New Valley Forge system which is home to TRACOM. These facilities, together with an Oberth-class spacedock serving as TRACOM headquarters, comprise Station Valley Forge.

Today, the SFMCA consists of 5 campuses, 8 training worlds, and 42 ranges and field courses throughout the UFP. Together with Station Valley Forge, the SFMCA comprises one of the largest and most advanced military training organizations in the known universe.