

Delta Force Study Guide

Delta Force by Charles Alvin Beckwith

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Contents

[Delta Force Study Guide..... 1](#)

[Contents..... 2](#)

[Plot Summary..... 3](#)

[Book 1, DELTA Force: Chapter 1, Prologue & Chapters 1 - 7..... 4](#)

[Book 1, Delta Force: Chapter 2, Chapters 8 - 12..... 6](#)

[Chapter 3, Chapters 13, 14, 15..... 7](#)

[Chapter 4, Chapters 16 & 17..... 9](#)

[Chapter 5, Chapters 18 & 19..... 10](#)

[Book 1, DELTA Force: Chapter 6, Chapters 19 - 22..... 11](#)

[Book 1, Delta Force : Chapter 7, Chapters 23 - 27..... 12](#)

[Chapter 8, Chapters 28 - 30..... 14](#)

[Chapter 9, Chapters 31 - 34..... 15](#)

[Book 1, DELTA Force: Chapter 10, Chapters 35 - 39..... 17](#)

[Chapter 11, Chapters 40 - 44..... 19](#)

[Chapter 12, Chapters 45 -47..... 21](#)

[Characters..... 22](#)

[Objects/Places..... 26](#)

[Themes..... 28](#)

[Style..... 31](#)

[Quotes..... 33](#)

[Topics for Discussion..... 34](#)



Plot Summary

This is an account of the project to rescue hostages held in Iran, by Iranians in 1980. This rescue attempt took place during the middle of what was internationally known as "the hostage crisis." Iranian university students took over the US Embassy, and took 66 prisoners. Thirteen were released early on after negotiations. The main reason for this course of action was because the same embassy was used by the American CIA in 1953 to restore the Shah to power in the country of Iran. There was a revolution in 1979 during which the Iranians did not want the Americans to control the outcome as had taken place a few decades earlier. Those who took the hostages were breaking an international agreement, although those who know enough history will quickly see why they stopped the American embassy from being able to function within Iran during this time. The author is one of the dominant military leaders of the project, a man who intended to both plan and participate in this effort. The book includes a prologue as well as the usual unfolding of the story. The work is dedicated to the man's wife and daughters.

The work begins after a plan has been devised by the military specialists. These people include the author, Colonel Beckwith, who is representing the military. He is taken to a meeting at the White House where the secret services are represented by a man he feels is surprisingly young, the President and Vice President are both there, and there also are two military generals and the Deputy Secretary of Defense. Interestingly enough, the author describes how he reacts to his own and other people's attire and behavior.

In order to explain this in a certain way, the author, in the first third of the book, provides readers with a rather complete history of his own military career and the history of the DELTA Force. The second third shows the processes—both social and military—that connect this man and this unit to this particular military operation.

The book covers the entire episode in American history. This was far enough in the past that it has become safe to disclose the information but is recent enough that many of the players are still living and the whole set of events continues to have a strong emotional component.



Book 1, DELTA Force: Chapter 1, Prologue & Chapters 1 - 7

Book 1, DELTA Force: Chapter 1, Prologue & Chapters 1 - 7 Summary and Analysis

During the Prologue of the book, the project and the deciding leaders are introduced. However, nothing will move forward without the knowledge and approval of the executive office. This plan includes a small number of helicopters, the intentional use of distracting "chaos," the commandeering of local buildings—especially a stadium to facilitate landing and take-off of the helicopters—and killing some of the hostage-takers.

The colonel cites a tactical problem regarding using aircraft support during the escape and evacuation portion of the plan. The entire action will take place over the course of April 24-26, 1980. The U.S. president at the time, Jimmy Carter, admitted that he did not want to take this course of action but at the same time he did grant permission for the plan to be carried out. He also accepted full responsibility for making this decision. Colonel Beckwith is moved and very impressed by the president in making this decision.

Chapter 1 begins with a reminiscence of a journey to Britain with his wife and children while a member of the military. Special Air Services are brought up. At this point the author was a captain and a Green Beret. He was still young. He was expected to join the British and to exchange knowledge. The colonel, at his captain rank, is really thrown off by the 22 SAS Brits. The soldiers behave in ways that he was successfully trained out of, such as leaving their beds unmade. He took a pair of corporals with him—they were Celts—a Welshman and an Irishman. At the end of Chapter 1 he receives the compliment of being given and asked to wear one of their SAS Brit berets.

Chapter 2: Beckwith observes SAS intake procedures. Often, no applicants make it in.

Chapter 3: After a few more field exercises, and Saturday night criticisms, Beckwith is accepted by the troops. The Brits invite Beckwith to join them on a real-life expedition to Malaya and he accepts.

Chapter 4: He is the second man down during an expedition in the jungle and his comrades make him leave.

Chapter 5: Use and misuse of the SAS. Special Forces need to know what they do not do well in order to be properly used. After a year with the British SAS he felt he knew how to improve the Special Forces—there were a few aspects of planning that the Americans did better, and a great deal else that he felt the Brits did surprisingly well.



Chapter 6: His wife and children did go to Britain, but not to Malaya. He is attached to B Company where his information about the British system will be beneficial. He thinks he has found an audience for his After Action Report about his year with the SAS.

Chapter 7: He begins creating exercises to display the knowledge he has acquired. He is promoted to 7th Group's operations officer. He pulls what is often called a peculiar "left maneuver" and sends a copy to a senator. This has a big effect, but the military opposition manages to catch and subdue the effort.



Book 1, Delta Force: Chapter 2, Chapters 8 - 12

Book 1, Delta Force: Chapter 2, Chapters 8 - 12 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 8 opens with the author having just received a promotion to major as part of his work as an operations officer. He brings his report from his time in Britain to the next officer over him. This was in 1964. His supervisor notes a few highlights, then screams at him until he leaves the office. The next day, after that same officer has calmed down and had a chance to think it over, he summons Beckwith, orders him to implement his findings right there and admits, "You were right," (p. 48). He is very happy about this, especially since he thought he was done for after his superior officer's initial reaction. Beckwith makes training changes in the 7th Group.

Chapter 9 starts on page 52. Here, Beckwith arrives in Viet Nam and finds the military compound has been virtually abandoned. He makes a flyer, and within six weeks he has the first DELTA Force, inspired by the SAS plus American organizational methods. The rest of the chapter is devoted to Beckwith's learning about the Vietnamese and Viet Nam. By taking a Vietnamese officer out to dinner to "talk shop" he increases his ability to come into reinforcements from the Vietnamese military. The major players here are Captain Kong, Major Tut, and General Quang.

In Chapter 10 Beckwith asserts that at this point his mission is to find the enemy and then report the information to higher-ups. There is an argument about competing operations, based on the use of helicopters at Plei Me, a stronghold of soldiers loyal to the country. He later learned that they were surrounded by two full regiments of the North Vietnamese Army. The battleground was such a mess that it was bulldozed.

Chapter 11 begins after the end of this last battle. He is taken to Pleiku where he is able to more directly thank the Air Force for their protection. He assures them that they made the difference—the Air Force saved his troops. Beckwith explains how arguments for control over certain parts of any given military operation are real. The new Delta Force performs well enough to make a good first impression on the rest of the military.

In Chapter 12 Beckwith is changing with his rank and increase in experience. He has become more adept at figuring out what he and his men are going to need and getting it. He writes that he has learned that promotion is a means of rewarding good work. He writes of the strong bond he has with the men: he is proud of them and worries about them. By early 1966 he was feeling indestructible and very proud of DELTA Force.



Chapter 3, Chapters 13, 14, 15

Chapter 3, Chapters 13, 14, 15 Summary and Analysis

Beckwith is repeatedly meeting with colonels and generals who are still over him. He now has a number of officers under him in addition to enlisted men—sergeants and noncommissioned officers. In this case, he is urged to accept a specific mission. During the meeting he asks for permission to quit and leave without getting into trouble. This is with the understanding that he wants to avoid being misused. Here "used" is meant in the best sense of being functional and beneficial instead of meaning "misused." Here "misused" also has the special meaning of being asked to work outside of their capabilities. This relates back to why the SAS asks applicants what they cannot do. He calls "enemy territory" Indian country, based on the old metaphor of the US military and settlers trying to make their way into native turf. He takes 35 DELTA Force troops into Bong Son. The 3rd Brigade is there. He meets with Lt. Col. Hal Moore. He tells the other man what he will do; which is use his men to go find VC [opponents] in the area. He assures Beckwith that he will use his troops to kill the VC.

Whether or not this information about how the DELTA Force came to be and what they did in Viet Nam is relevant to the Iranian hostage crisis that the book claims to be about is not presently clear. It might all be needed background information, but it might be an unfocused work. That will become clear by the end.

Beckwith gets shot before he even makes it to the LZ. He regains consciousness long enough to demand that he is worth working on instead of being left to die from bleeding to death. He spends a long time in the recovery ward of the hospital. He is a major now, being promoted to captain as he was at the beginning of the book. He notices that the surgeons work around the clock, and snatch sleep when they can, just like the combat soldiers. He spent January 1966 to May 1966 hospitalized. After that he was "claimed" by Fort Benning in Georgia. He is also reunited with his wife and children after nearly a year apart. There is no explanation of why she was not able to reach him while he was in the military hospital.

In Chapter 14, Charlie Beckwith goes back to training personnel. He is very sad and frustrated and fears his idea to have an SAS type of group among the American Special Forces is not going to make it. Within a couple of years he has been promoted to Lt. Colonel and now, he is going to go back to Viet Nam. His wife is supportive but does not agree.

Chapter 15: Early February 1968, Viet Nam. Beckwith is assigned an entire battalion, the 2nd Battalion, which is part of the 101st Airborne, his battalion was part of the 327th. By now Beckwith has explained that sergeants are a vital bridge in communication and implementation between higher-ranking officers and the lower ranks. Here, lower rank is not meant as an insult—remember how Scott and Larsen, the lance corporals, were "first in" but that people in those positions should only speak to the sergeants, and it is



the duty of the sergeants to communicate to the officers—most often a lieutenant, but often enough they also work with captains. Beckwith spends nine months in a sort of "seek and destroy" mode in Viet Nam. He and the troops were highly effective, and this was very trying. There were many injuries, and losses.

This book was published in 1983 and he notes that he is still "haunted" by some of what went on during those nine months in 1968. He was able to make war against the NVA rather than the local VC. General Orlinto Barasanti was commanding the division and Beckwith liked this. Colonel Christian vastly improved Beckwith's writing and editing abilities. Then, when he thought he would make full colonel but did not, he found out why. Two reasons were given: he did not have a degree and he had angered and hurt many other officers. So he completed his degree, and it went very well. Less than a year later, he was promoted to full colonel from lieutenant colonel. It was late 1973 or early 1974. Suddenly, in 1975 he is asked for a write-up about the Brits, by now General Healey.



Chapter 4, Chapters 16 & 17

Chapter 4, Chapters 16 & 17 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 16 begins with the reemergence of this "American version of a 22 SAS unit" as part of American Special Forces. He explains how, now, this is in the hands of generals and colonels, which helps. Charlie Beckwith is now told to make some specific changes to his paper in order to prepare the best briefing. He explains that the Joint Chiefs of Staff is a small committee, with a representative general from each of the four armed forces along with a chairman of the committee who has been appointed by the president. These are the official liaisons to congress. Beckwith is assured that in order for this to work, to implement this new change they are going to have to get it directly to the JCS and out to the civilian arms of the government.

Training is the other main role involved at this time: military training of the indigenous people. This role is less glamorous but often viewed as extremely important within the military because that's really what matters. The way to communicate the project becomes a little bizarre when one man is selected solely because his presentation skills and ability to memorize are both fantastic, so he is readily used despite a terrifying lack of experience in Special Operations. Beckwith calls him their "salesman" and sure enough, he performs extraordinarily well in giving briefings. More details are flushed out; the author describes the conversations and the meetings with the same passion with which he described running the ridges and burning leeches off each others' buttocks. Despite the anxiety produced by the obstacles with which they are confronted, Beckwith now has help and the plans for the unit are being honed into realistic detail. The smallest group of personnel this DELTA could include is 40 soldiers—a platoon. The Brits had set out the idea of having 16 troopers [men in the old days, but now and in the future men or women or some of each] that could be used to run eight pairs, four sets of four, or two groups of eight. The idea what that the should be flexible about how they work together. DELTA Force was being designed to provide counter terrorist services. General Kroesen's support was secured; he would back this idea when it was presented to the Army Chief of Staff.

Chapter 17: Colonel Charlie Beckwith is introduced to General Meyer, who Beckwith explains has actually been behind all of the progress of this project. He is asked to set forth cost and equipment details. He is forced to part with one of his best friends and a strong supporter of the DELTA project because the man is going to Korea. He points out the difference between people who get certain assignments because they will either move their families or undergo separations from them and those who will not relocate and how both kinds have to live with the consequences.



Chapter 5, Chapters 18 & 19

Chapter 5, Chapters 18 & 19 Summary and Analysis

A brief analysis of the book so far. The tone is informative and personable. The author sticks to the facts; he has integrated his emotions into his accounts quite well. At one point he describes himself as an emotional man and it comes across as well within norms of masculinity within the context presented. At the beginning of the book, he tells of a meeting with President Carter and of how a counter terrorist special forces group will be used to rescue the hostages held by young Iranians at the US Embassy in 1980. Then he takes readers back to 1962, which at first does not seem to make sense. Fourteen years, 100 pages, and 17 chapters of the book later, the author is still trying to get a counter terrorist special forces group installed as a permanent fixture of the American military. The short chapters help the true-life tale keep moving along, although after the first 100 pages it still doesn't seem to make sense—why he is writing about the past rather than simply about what happened in 1980. The book was originally published in 1983, only shortly after the events happened. There are some errors in the writing, which is disturbing to perfectionists, but the errors are not so rife as to ruin the value of the book as a professional piece of writing. The generation and some of the biases of the author show in the writing. Some readers, especially young women, may become enflamed during parts of it. He is a married man who does not cheat on his wife, but he seems to think that leaving his wife and children for months or even over a year on end won't create problems in his family.

In Chapter 18, Charlie Beckwith has plans on paper, a budget that has been intentionally distorted to make it seem cheaper than it would really be, and a few key personnel. He is concerned with successfully selling the idea to the Pentagon and assembling more personnel. Beckwith focuses on his need to find a good sergeant major. He goes to General Meyer and requests to be given DELTA Force as his full-time position, instead of also running the Special Forces School. The General warns him and tells him yes. Funding matters are discussed. The stockade at Fort Bragg becomes the home of DELTA Force. Some funding is secured. They still need personnel and training and the rest of their equipment and to fit it efficiently into the military's hierarchy; this is encouraged along by General Rogers. Events in which the West Germans' Grenzschutzgruppe 9 rescued a hijacked aircraft fueled this. The CSA blesses the DELTA project. Then Beckwith gets a readout of how DELTA has been placed into the hierarchical order of things, and it's an inefficient mess. Interpersonal relations are once again stressed as vital to the solution.



Book 1, DELTA Force: Chapter 6, Chapters 19 - 22

Book 1, DELTA Force: Chapter 6, Chapters 19 - 22 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 19: The selection process for DELTA Force is created. Beckwith describes the first two runs of this process. Fewer than 20 percent make it through the first run, and the results are similar the second time, with only 5 of 60 men being accepted into the group for training. Funding and staffing are both areas beset by internal military competition. At the end of the chapter, Beckwith reports that momentum is beginning to move in favor of his project.

Chapter 20 begins with Beckwith feeling "rushed" by other powers within the military force. The chapter concludes by reporting that the governing offices ceased to attempt to hurry the process.

Chapter 21 begins with asserting that minor paranoia symptoms are often a sign about the truth of what they are doing. For some soldiers, and duties, one should expect and hope to find at least a little paranoia. There is a strange meeting with General Rogers. The end result is for him to clean up the line of command, to improve the efficiency of DELTA Force. General Rogers does this by directing Colonel Beckwith to keep him informed. Beckwith explains to readers that this means General Rogers is giving him the authority that he needs to work some of DELTA's processes. General Rogers is a four star general at this point. The chapter ends with Beckwith realizing that they were really fortunate that General Rogers had stopped by and found them when they had done their homework.

Chapter 22: In this chapter, the first order of business is to continue to improve the efficiency concerns regarding how DELTA fits into the Army hierarchy. General Meyer straightens a lot of this out. Colonel Beckwith has to stay under General Jack Mackmull. Charlie writes what General Meyer had managed to do: At the top there is the Dept. of the Army—including the Chief of Staff and General Meyer. Immediately beneath is [a place called JFK and] General Mackmull. Below him is Charlie Beckwith and DELTA Force. General Meyer gave Charlie the authority to call him directly whenever he went loggerheads with Mackmull. This solved a lot of problems. Finally, they were able to accept Green Beret and Ranger applicants for the DELTA Force. They ran two sets of intake tests. They were able to acquire far more men this way. By May 1978, Charlie Beckwith had sufficient manpower to create a squadron-sized unit. Now they were ready to begin training.



Book 1, Delta Force : Chapter 7, Chapters 23 - 27

Book 1, Delta Force : Chapter 7, Chapters 23 - 27 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 23: Here the author informs readers about the Operators Course for those who have survived the entry into the Special Operations testing. Shooting training, by way of example, was practiced for 15-20 hours weekly. This may or not seem strange: it is the same amount of time as many part-time jobs. Beckwith gives some details about the relationship between the experience the Germans had with the aircraft hijacking, and how this pertained to some of the training methods used by Beckwith in developing DELTA Force.

Chapter 24: Beckwith feels he is making progress. He describes the men and how highly valued it is when people take the initiative to attend to important matters. He recounts the story of how he found an excellent captain functioning as one of the sergeants. He tells of Fast Eddie the demolitions man and how Fast "found" and ordered a surprising batch of equipment, including a bulldozer. There is discord over \$18,000 in fence repairs. They finally get the work done, saving themselves \$3,000 by not hiring contractors to do it. During the chapter, Beckwith, now a colonel, shows readers what the DELTA Force culture is like. He lets readers know that, DELTA Force didn't consist of "yes men."

Chapter 25: There was a much cleaner and clearer chain of command now. No one in the top three positions had any direct personal experience with Special Forces. In two of the three cases, this was not a cause of particular concern: Beckwith thought that in the case of Rod Renick it would matter a lot. Evaluation time was coming, regardless of their preparedness. When General Meyer presented evaluations, Beckwith felt there were both unfair and fair assessments made. He writes once more that he is an emotional man. The main problem is that DELTA Force is not part of the Rangers; this causes a command and control problem because there is tension rather than unity between this group and the rest of the Special Forces. The physical fitness program was unusual: the men ran two at a time, and tended to their programs on their own. In this sense, they are like the civilians.

Chapter 26: Beckwith was able to have his name put onto a command list for the first, or one of the first times, at this point. There was some disturbance among the generals because Beckwith was a brand new "temp" colonel and although his performance with his DELTA Force troops was fantastic, it was intimidating; some would call it the "I wish I had done that syndrome."

Chapter 27: This starts in 1978. Shooting is reexamined. Two contrary facts emerge. In some cases, forcing the troopers to load their own guns improves shooting because the



three hours it took their snipers to load their rifles made them more efficient. However, for the shooting that was not sniping, using more ammunition improved performance. So, it depends on what you need to do. Beckwith writes that the commander influences the culture of the squadron with a mysterious pervasiveness. One of the men describes the culture of the DELTA Force as consisting in higher quality people—people who are at his level.

The tone of the writing is direct and informative. The author is impersonal in the sense that it continues to be the proverbial warm fuzzies of personalities and subjectivity when compared with the style used for any rigorous scientific approach or description. Readers can learn a great deal from this, about various aspects of the situation, and yet it continues to be an easy-to-read book. It is not remotely difficult to grasp.



Chapter 8, Chapters 28 - 30

Chapter 8, Chapters 28 - 30 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 28, Beckwith tricks his own men and puts them through a training exercise that the troops believe is real. They are testing the "kill or no kill" response in the soldiers. This is the first step in the process that occurs when people cope with killing. In the field the truth is that many who have trained to do so will not and that those who definitely will tend to do a higher proportion of it than those who had thought they would but discover that they won't. Again, German behavior influenced the conditions. German snipers did not kill in one case; this caused leaders to grow concerned about ensuring that their troops could do it. In another case, the Germans inspired the Americans by retrieving a hijacked aircraft, and rescuing the passengers through force of arms. The soldiers performed very well and were quite upset when they learned they had been duped into believing that a well-run training exercise had been the real thing.

Chapter 29: In 1979 General Meyer, nicknamed Moses for having saved people so many times, became the new Chief of Staff of the Army. The DELTA Force, which had developed for some time, leveled out. This was distressing to some in a new way. This chapter, like the others, is clear and rather short.

Chapter 30: Beckwith explains that testing covers both team skills and individual skills. Evaluators are shipped in, the commanders both fear and honor these people. Naturally, everyone prefers serving under some people more than others. Beckwith has explained earlier, however, that in some cases, a misunderstanding caused by a bad initial experience can be cleared up leading to long-term improvements in the relationship. Here the author explains that events take place quite rapidly, and that the time between entering a room to clear it and the time involved with all "melee" combat elements of a given scenario can occur within seven seconds. The case disclosed in this chapter involves a training exercise when they had to take two targets: one was an aircraft and the other was a building. Beckwith explains that this is actually quite challenging and that DELTA performed very well. After this, it is decided that the president is the one who has the authority to flip the switch and call this force into action. Once mobilized, the three-level chain of command comes into play, but no one other than the president can command that it be used. The chapter ends with a defining moment: The American embassy has been overtaken; the staff are being held hostage.



Chapter 9, Chapters 31 - 34

Chapter 9, Chapters 31 - 34 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 31 starts on 4 November 1979. Two men from DELTA were sent, upon invitation, to join a man from the other Special Ops groups—Major Shaw. Three of them went to Washington together. According to Beckwith, three are enough to ensure actually being heard. The Iranian hostage crisis finally returns to the center stage of the book as suggested in the beginning. Military intelligence was a pressing need, in that the American's Special Operations people would benefit from as many details as they could possibly gather about the situation, especially information regarding the guards and their equipment. The location of the hostages would be exceptionally helpful information. General Meyer wants to have a conversation with Colonel Beckwith—"Moses" Meyer is acting Chief of Staff of the Army. General Vaught signaled the introduction of what from henceforth would be known as operation "Rice Bowl" (p. 195). Beckwith sums this man up by telling readers that, "...He would have told you that his first name was General," (p. 195).

In Chapter 32 readers find that communication channels are running from the CIA to the JCS and Camp Smokey. The problem seems to be that they have no intelligence information gathering operatives in Teheran. There is some intelligence coming through, but only some of it is valuable. Intelligence operatives require five to seven years of training and then, to be placed, are settled into a given nation where he or she spends years living under cover. Only after this is achieved can anything really be accomplished. A lot of intelligence operatives were lost in 1979 during staff "roll overs" in the American intelligence service the CIA. Air Force Major General Gast was able to make himself useful without getting in the way of the conferences to develop an effective plan. He admitted that he had no idea about Special Operations but that he could provide some beneficial information about Iran, which he really did know something about.

Chapter 33: At this point, they are trying to figure out how to get both into and out of Iran. The troops themselves tended to be interested in the activity the next organizational size larger than the one in which they operated and harbored their usual perspective. There were a number of activities dedicated to skill development at this time, mainly involving the proper systems for transporting, using, and tending to the weaponry. The author explains that this was actually complex, more so than readers may have guessed. Finally, as plans progress Beckwith explains that the sergeant major is "his own right arm," and this is coming from a right-handed man. The NCO is the liaison between the officers, or the CO and the rest of the men. He reports to those who are interested in what Beckwith has been doing, and how he is behaving today.

Chapter 34: The plans for the hostage rescue mission are brought out and worked on. The need for realism becomes compelling and requires thoroughly thinking through the details. Some of these are self-evident, but disastrous if overlooked. In this case, it is



decided that helicopters will be used to move in and out of the conditions, and that these will be transported to the region by aircraft carrier ships. The US Embassy grounds are roughly equivalent to the size of a small university campus. One of the major obstacles is how to get these people evacuated. They can use helicopters but only if they can get them fueled—Iran is so far inland, that this is harder than it seems. Not only do they need to accomplish this, they need it done in secret. Charlie Beckwith, as a colonel, tells the generals and the ACS that they are going to require at least 70 men to accomplish the tasks demanded by the mission. The helicopters used had to be modified, mine-sweeping capabilities were removed and replaced by larger fuel tanks to gain 400 miles of travel without refueling.



Book 1, DELTA Force: Chapter 10, Chapters 35 - 39

Book 1, DELTA Force: Chapter 10, Chapters 35 - 39 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 35: "Intelligence is to Special Operations as numbers are to a mathematician," (p. 223). The Germans, including a personal friend, offer to assist, but General Vaught tells Colonel Beckwith to pass up the opportunity to have American spies on a German television crew in Teheran. The reality was Colonel Beckwith needed daredevil pilots to fly the helicopters on this mission. It is determined to try training Marine Corps helicopter pilots for this mission. It was concluded that the best course of action to take was to enable the helicopters to refuel in the desert by drop loading them supplies from the air. Lieutenant Colonel Sieffert led his Marine Corps pilots through training drills. They were being asked to learn to fly the helicopters in rough terrain at night, so close to the hills that they could avoid radar detection. They would be able to share a type of night vision goggle that one person can only use for half an hour at a time. They knew they had work to do in order to be able to do this. Beckwith concludes the chapter by admitting to readers that the problem might really have been that he did not send two of his highly experienced Viet Nam veteran helicopter pilots, including Master Sergeant No Lips out to the Marines to help them—including Seiffert. Beckwith reports that he himself very much needed the two men he would have sent to help them, but the consequences of holding them back from the Marine Corps' lieutenant colonel may have been a very serious error.

Chapter 36: It took two runs to drop the fuel correctly, and they learned from this run-through that it took a long time for them to refuel the helicopters using this system. There was disagreement about "standing down" for the winter holidays, and the location of the troops. Colonel Beckwith wanted to keep everyone together for security purposes. They needed six helicopters for 120 personnel needed for this mission. General Vaught endorsed this. If the Russians got photos of the C-130s or aircraft carrier, they would be able to figure out what was going on. The access to accurate weather information influenced the events.

Chapter 37: Changes in the assault plan were to use an Air Force plane for the refueling. This demanded a landing site for the aircraft. The information for this was handled by a CIA man with much real-life experience. People are not comfortable with the helicopters and the pilots, even though they are assuming that the Marine pilots they are using are the best option. Finally, a good man was found to fulfill some of the intelligence requirements. He was a garden variety soldier serving overseas; this made him familiar with the culture. When the chapter ends something rather personal comes up. Colonel Beckwith is threatened by a German storage company that he had better



collect his things or else they would be auctioned off. One of the Shah's former body guards is included, but parts of the plan have to be withheld from him.

Chapter 38: Intelligence reports were streaming in. This helped immensely. Meanwhile, DELTA Force had run through six complete drills of the rescue mission, and had performed at least 100 repetitions of smaller parts of the mission. Beckwith admits that conditions worsened in one way—his troopers were beginning to get bored and when Fast Eddie, the demolitions man, was yelled at by the colonel, the environment shifted. The men were affected by this. By the end of this chapter, Beckwith feels he has prepared DELTA Force well enough that he is now upset if the administration won't use them.

Chapter 39: Beckwith declares that he believes generals should behave as generals and not try to act like battalion commanders. The mission was extremely vulnerable to armored, mechanized forces between saving and releasing the hostages and getting them out. To balance this out, air support was called for and found, to prevent and to counter a mechanized forces attack. This chapter ends when General Jones who is the Chief of Staff of the Army confers with Colonel Beckwith about preparedness for this mission. Now that the DELTA Force is prepared for this one specific mission, Colonel Beckwith is getting eager to use it. Beckwith carries a Colt .45 handgun that is simultaneously loaded, cocked, and yet locked for safety.



Chapter 11, Chapters 40 - 44

Chapter 11, Chapters 40 - 44 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 40: Charlie Beckwith describes Eagle Claw in more detail. He is in one of the groups transported to Iran. The Blue, Red, and White element have their own system and portion of the project to contend with. Included in this are details such as bringing along anyone who searches their vehicles. The colonel will be part of the live recon mission in Teheran. He is growing more eager to go ahead. Generals Jones and Vaught are now informed supporters of the plan.

Chapter 41: Colonel Charlie Beckwith meets President Carter at the White House, along with a couple of the Army generals. The President assures the military that General David Jones is the commanding officer for Eagle Claw. This helped, since General Meyer and General Jones were both over Colonel Beckwith and there was some concern due to lack of clarity regarding the command and control. General Meyer was not offended by this decision. The home of DELTA Force is still called The Stockade because that is what it was before it was turned into this home for the new Special Operations Group. "The mission now numbered 132 men: 2 Iranian Generals; 12 drivers; a 12-man Road Watch Team, including translators, who would secure Desert One; the 13-man special assault team; and Delta's 93 operators and staff," (p. 261).

Chapter 42: 21 April 1980 DELTA Force lands in Egypt. Lt. Col. Potter went ahead and insured that DELTA Force had what was needed upon arrival. The chain of command is explicitly stated during a heated discussion. Everyone not in it, knows to "butt out" and "mind their own business." In Egypt, the Americans are actually able to make use of an old Russian military base. They choose to scrub the dried human feces from the concrete floor to make it more enjoyable when they do. There are four Department of Defense contacts in Iran. Red, White, and Blue elements of the DELTA Force continued to train. A CIA agent manages to take a seat beside released US embassy personnel and easily obtains substantial high-quality intelligence for the operation. An Air Force colonel made a brief comment regarding some glitch, which troubled Colonel Beckwith.

Chapter 43: Charlie Beckwith writes that this is quite exciting—to have created a new command, to prepare it, and now to be taking it off to war to fight using it. Beckwith explains that they came upon a vehicle, which they stopped and had to take hostages—there was no intention of injuring them, but they were very intent on keeping them out of the way. Then there are burning trucks. The C-130s unload. The men divide and prepare their equipment to make the next leg of the journey, on the helicopters. There was a problem with the Iranian general they had taken from the Shah's army. He was not willing to fight his own people over this, which he showed by his throwing away his weapon. The helicopters were 20 minutes late. There were severe implications of this as their cover was dependent upon the timing of sunrise. The pilot of the first helicopter to arrive is someone the men of DELTA Force have already met and like, but not whom they expected. He tells Beckwith they should abort the mission. Charlie assures him



that isn't going to happen. They should have stopped there but did not: they were raring to go.

Chapter 44: The mission is in serious trouble—the helicopter problems cited during the early stages of preparation are so real, that the operation is now confounded by them. The timing has been ruined. A tanker truck, a helicopter, a lot of ammunition, and one of the C-130s goes up in flames because of trouble flying helicopters in the wind and sandstorms. The soldiers evacuate. When this chapter starts, they are regrouping. The mistakes become evident and begin piling up: the author describes a number of them. First, helicopter troubles; second, air strike requested but not performed; third, communication troubles that caused equipment to be left where the enemy could get to it when they had intended to destroy it. These and other errors had Colonel Beckwith stewing in the pain of his own failure.



Chapter 12, Chapters 45 -47

Chapter 12, Chapters 45 -47 Summary and Analysis

Helicopters are like Harleys and MGs and Porsches in that they require a lot of TLC, specialized handling from people who know them intimately in order to approach reliable functionality. Beckwith explains that in Viet Nam, this practice was understood and followed. In Eagle Claw there was an error to the opposite end—crews unfamiliar with their finicky nature who didn't even know what it was like to need to rely on these helicopters under life/death conditions tended to them. President Carter assures the survivors that he is very proud of them, even though the effort failed and reminded Colonel Beckwith that "we" still needed to come up with something that would work to rescue the hostages.

Chapter 46: Charlie is now called into Washington. He meets with the Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and is told that "...it has been decided," (p.288) that he is going to meet the press and answer for Eagle Claw. He "goes crying to Moses Meyer." He brings General Jones with him. Someone from the Department of Defense shows up. Charlie assures them he's willing to lie, and he gets rebuked—he is told not to lie, but to refuse to answer and to redirect the questioner to someone who has the authority to make any disclosures. Charlie is moved that they are that honest at or so close to the top. He is reassured by the president and tells others that he is certain that he would have pointlessly killed many of the men if they had attempted to continue instead of aborting the mission.

Chapter 47: Here, during a committee meeting, Charlie Beckwith tells a senator that he thinks the military should devise a counter terrorist organization that is permanent and has everything that is needed. Colonel Beckwith made up with the troops, lived through both dreams and nightmares about DELTA Force and made recommendations to politicians. In the last case, he told them the same thing. America should have a counter terrorist group as part of Special Ops. Meanwhile, he thought of his wife and children and their needs again. He informs readers that the government actually has a reputation among the military for not keeping secrets. He reports that because of this, the military wouldn't even talk to them, and this created problems. General Meyer helped Charlie get together with some of his men and put together a project description for a joint forces counter terrorist organization. Meyer was able to get him a yes with clearance to get going before the end of the next business day. With that, the book ends.



Characters

Beckwith

Charlie Beckwith is the author of the book. He is also a principle character in relation to the plot of this nonfiction book. The contents actually involve over twenty years of his life. This includes his progression through officer ranks in the Army. He serves as an operations officer, and forms a type of special operations unit later on. He is an Infantry soldier. The book does a time-loop, which includes a prolonged flashback, during which readers learn a great deal about his development as an officer. It also gives readers much background regarding DELTA Force, which better explains what happened during the Iranian hostage crisis rescue attempt. This also reveals truths that may have been being taken for granted— since the events of 1980, the Americans have figured out how to fly in the Middle East, and can now cope with the sand which destroyed their efforts, as well as realizing the harshness of Russian winters which have taken out many foreign troops during military campaigns.

At the beginning of the flashback, Beckwith is a captain. It takes years and a great deal of experience for him to be promoted. He does a good job of showing readers at least some of what changes occur with increases in rank. These do not show clearly in the chapter summary, due to the necessary selection of which information will be shared.

Charlie Beckwith describes himself as an emotional man more than once during the book. He writes of the bonding that takes place among soldiers; this is summed up by his description of the soldiers' willingness to use cigarettes to burn the leeches from each other while in the middle of a swamp having not slept for 48 hours or longer. This will be done even if the leeches are lodged between someone's butt cheeks.

Charlie is headstrong, and persevering even though he also suffers from impatience, angry outbursts, and tremendous amounts of frustration. His resolve gets him there in the end.

Jimmy Carter

This is the man known for having been both a peanut farmer and a US president. Since his presidency ended, he is known as a philanthropist and "really good guy to the core," giving through public service. At the time of the Iranian hostage crisis, Jimmy Carter was the US president. Charlie Beckwith flat out admits that he had doubted President Carter had the literal or so called "balls" to even make the hostage rescue attempt. He was deeply moved and really impressed when he found out that President Carter said yes to the military rescue effort.

Carter did not act rashly. He approved a pre-established plan that special troops had been carefully trained for. Charlie Beckwith had been working on solving this very crisis for over a year before it even came up at the White House. The military forces were



able to sell the president on this but he admitted that he did not really like letting it happen. He set the authority for control of the project upon General Jones, Chief of Staff of the Army at that time.

Jimmy Carter appears in the book at the beginning and at the end. Beckwith admires and appreciates how Carter communicated with him after the Iranian hostage crisis as well as being thankful to him for letting them at least try.

Lieutenant Colonel Miley

This is American Army man who appears as a Lt. Col. shortly after Beckwith has returned to America from his time with the British. Miley is actually Beckwith's "saving grace" and a sign of how much Beckwith and the Army have changed. The trouble is that Beckwith tries to fit himself back into the Army after his year with the SAS but it doesn't work very smoothly.

Miley, however, has also had some dealing with the Brits, which creates a source of bonding. He can use Beckwith and make the most of the man's experience. But Beckwith had no history with Miley. It took a few incidents for Charlie to realize that he needed to go ahead with the new superior officer, and that everything would be OK.

Miley shows up in the book while he is a Lt. Col., in Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 and then fades out of Beckwith's life until chapters 26 and 27 near the middle of the book while Charlie was in Viet Nam.

Peter Walter [British SAS CO]

This gentleman appears in the book early on. He is a British man. During the time when he appears in the book, he is a Major. At this rank, he is the commanding officer of the 22 SAS, which is a British special forces group designed for use as a counter terrorist group. He hosts the group that takes in American officers as part of an exchange program. Beckwith views him as a high-quality major and as a good commanding officer.

Scott

A fine lance corporal SAS trooper. He doesn't make his bed during chapter two but he and Larson are often the first in at an RV. He appears in the early part of the book, when the American Beckwith spends a year with the British SAS when he is a Special Forces Army captain in 1962. He is a Celt, an Irishman.



Larson

This man appears early on in the story when the American Army officer goes to spend a year with the British Army's SAS. He discovers Larson, who is a Scotsman, has left his bed unmade and views this as a major perk of being in a special operations company rather than part of the "regular Army." He appears as a lance corporal in 1962; he and the other non-English British fellow, Scott—who is Irish—often perform quite well in their field exercises.

General Meyer

This man appears many times during the book. Unlike Beckwith, Meyer is written of only while at the rank of general. Due in part to his rank in the Army, he comes up a lot. He has the nickname "Moses." Beckwith explains that he is called this because of the number of times that he has "saved their butts" in times of danger and trouble. In Beckwith's Army, the majority of the men have nick names.

Katherine

Katherine is one of the few women who are mentioned in this book. This is partly due to the time in which it was written in relation to the content. In other words, Charlie Beckwith's world view does not include a "women's warrior society." Therefore, for him, as a soldier, it's better when the women and children are protected from participation. This is a point about which many agree. During his service in Viet Nam, evacuating women and children when the battle came too near was one of his desires.

Katherine is Charlie Beckwith's wife. It is rightly assumed that she and the children had numerous life experiences without Charlie, especially since he gave them little to no choice, but just went off on military campaigns now and again.

Katherine is important to him "even though he acts like that," meaning causes separations like that.

She is mentioned as having typed one version of his After Action Report.

the kids

Charlie informs readers that he has children. He includes them in the old-fashioned way with "the wife and kids." Readers who have or who want to have children know how good this can be and how important it really is. Feelings and judgments about how much the author is and is not there with his wife and children will vary from reader to reader.



Master Sergeant

There is one Master Sergeant Westfall in the book. There is something special about sergeants. Normally, they are the vital link between the officers and the enlisted men. Charlie Beckwith has described both his Master Sergeant and another officer's as the officer's "right arm," and this is coming from a right-handed man.

When the sergeant fails to perform, and to keep the enlisted men in tow or corrupts them, incidents happen such as when Beckwith found in Viet Nam—the sergeant had lost perspective and/or control of the men. Part of what he did would have made perfect sense under civilian conditions, but was inappropriate for a military operation.

As such, the master sergeant rank deserves special mention. If anyone enlisted wants to tell the commanding officer anything, then the sergeant will know and will do this. When enlisted personnel want to know what is going on, their sergeant will find out. When the officer needs something to happen, especially when he is busy, he will confer regularly with a sergeant or sergeants about it and will trust the sergeant to ensure that it will happen. In other words, there is always at least one sergeant who reports directly to the officer. Sergeants are often called NCOs, meaning non-commissioned officers. Master Sergeant is but one kind of sergeant.



Objects/Places

Fort Bragg

This is one of the most important locations in the book. A great deal of training and development goes on at this Army fort. It is mentioned in many chapters as the setting for the true story.

Colt .45

Charlie Beckwith wears one of these as his personal sidearm late in the book. He feels he is "that kind of man." He keeps it not only loaded, but "cocked and locked" in his holster.

Special Forces patch

This is mentioned once, when one man has to inform an imported officer that his Special Forces patch has been sown onto his uniform upside down. It may have simply been a foolish mistake but is referred to as his supreme ignorance when it comes to Special Operations.

The Stockade

In this book, this means the home of DELTA Force. The reason for this is straightforward. It had been the stockade of Fort Bragg before Charlie Beckwith obtained permission to use it to make office and storage space for his "pet project"—DELTA Force, the counter terrorism unit.

RH-53D

This is a type of helicopter. At the time the book was published in 1983, this was the largest helicopter available to American military forces. It can carry 30 people. It is mentioned a few times, most specifically near the end.

C-130

This is a type of aircraft that was used as part of the Iranian hostage rescue plan. They are not particularly large. They can carry cargo or personnel, but this flexibility means that they are not like passenger aircraft.



the Pentagon

This refers to the world famous building located in Washington, DC, and is where the most important military leaders have their offices. The Joint Chiefs of Staff of the military forces have offices in this building, and are those most mentioned in this book.

the White House

This is the official residence and location of presidential offices for the United States of America. The White House appears in the book a few times. Important meetings take place there and there is an implied sense of shock and awe when the author attends meetings at the White House.

cell

This is one name for a small military unit. Charlie Beckwith makes up a military grouping that has cells of 13.

cell

This is the "jail & prison" usage of the term. When DELTA takes over the Stockade, each cell—concrete block, barred window or no window—has to have the bed sawed from the floor to be released. Then it is used for its new purpose—to store DELTA Force gear or personnel.

rose garden

Charlie Beckwith has a rose garden planted around the front of the Stockade to help make it presentable in its new form.

NVA

This is an acronym for North Vietnamese Army. These soldiers were on the opposing side of the conflict during the military presence and campaign that the Americans participated in during the 1960s and 1970s.

VC

This is an abbreviation for Viet Cong—a military group that is somewhere between what would now be called Viet Nam's military and a terrorist group that forged alliances with the government of the nation, or at least of that region.



Themes

Command and Control leadership

Much of this book involves the author's progress through military officer ranks. At every stage of this there are issues concerning who is in command, and who is in control of which projects and activities. This is also true for enlisted personnel but the structure and implications are different. For enlisted personnel, they are given tasks to perform. The higher the ranks, the more personnel involved, and therefore more managerial requisites and more responsibility.

Charlie Beckwith is an officer over soldiers. The higher in rank he rises the more people are under him and the fewer people there are over him. While he is with the SAS, he has a commanding officer. This is similar in some regard to the civilian corporate or government world. There are people over him he may not ever meet and others who he knows. The lower ranks are usually highly interested in those above them, often enough because of how much they are affected by what the CO, commanding officer, does. The other reason is that people are interested in each other, on the whole. Like everyone else, Beckwith prefers it when he likes who he is serving under, and cares deeply for those serving under him.

There are many steps that Charlie takes during the progression which result in him declaring that he has gone unheard, and not noticed. The reason for this is that higher ups may have intentionally or unintentionally decided "to see what Beckwith would do." He implements control where his command allows for it. Clarity of command, and therefore of control, come into play. For the purposes of the Iranian hostage rescue mission, Beckwith had secured command of the entire unit of men who formed the group DELTA Force. The Joint Chiefs of Staff provide Beckwith with a very clear schematic chain of command for the Delta Force prior to sending it out on the Iranian hostage rescue mission. Everyone now knows exactly where they stand in relation to one another. Command and control leadership is designed to help ensure that activities are done well and that participants are clear on what their responsibilities are. The chain of command can be short or very long as with enlisted personnel. When Beckwith has risen from captain to full colonel, the chain of command for DELTA Force has only the president, and the Joint Chief of Staff of the Army over him. There had been some confusion because two generals involved were involved—this is called "double hatting." In the case of the Iranian hostage crisis it was seen as anathema, and the president and Chief of Staff of the Army got rid of the double command problem. The president further simplified the chain of command by assuring the CSA general and Colonel Beckwith he expected the CSA to handle the matter entirely. Finally, the colonel did go to the base camp himself, if not always always to the battle field.



The Progression of Beckwith's Idea for an American Special F

As the book progresses, Beckwith shows what he goes through when he has an idea which he acquired from his time with 22 SAS, the British Special Forces. Here his commanding officer was Major Walter of the British SAS. The major was a squadron commander in this case. From this Captain Charlie Beckwith gets the idea that the Americans should develop a counter terrorist group that is modeled on the Brits' SAS but that adds the benefits of American planning to it. He wants to find commanders who can help him to achieve his idea, and he wants to be able to command his project. He writes up and submits an After Action Report. He sent it to a couple of high-ranking officers, but a few months later it seems that it didn't receive any attention. However, he does not forget this. He is able to get the British SAS exchange soldier assigned to his company. He involves the SAS captain in planning a field exercise. He submits a critique of training exercises to the colonel of his battalion and includes recommendations that he developed through his SAS experience in the "solutions" part. He is being used as an operations officer under Lt. Col. Miley, who is his British-friendly Lieutenant Colonel.

He implements as much of his idea as he can, when he can. He also repeatedly brings it up. In Nha Trang, Colonel McKean gives Charlie permission for a project DELTA. He is sent to a place where the enlisted men have run rampant under a sergeant who has apparently lost all perspective on what his role there is. After conferring with his commanding colonel—McKean—Beckwith relieves the sergeant along with a large number of other men since tanning at the beach and running a sideline business in the village are not American military operations. Major Beckwith has reassignment power and while he does not have hiring power in the ordinary sense, he has recruiting power for reassignment from others already working in the military. The field major uses both of these. He makes up fliers and advertises to thousand or more men that they can volunteer to become part of his unit there in Viet Nam. It works.

After Viet Nam, Beckwith felt "stymied" but kept implementing material that he had learned during his time with the SAS as well as what he'd learned with the Americans. He almost reformulated a Special Forces Rangers unit for use in Viet Nam, but it doesn't work. He is promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. He responds to criticism and does what the people who did not promote him to full colonel recommended. He pays more attention to how Special Forces works. He markets the idea again, but has risen in ranks far enough that he can present them personally to those powerful enough to help him implement it. He is able to get the idea pitched well enough that he secures "conceptual approval" from the top. Then he recruits around the Army until he finds some officers who will help him. He works to find the equipment, personnel, and space for it. After he has made a home for the DELTA Force in the Stockade and planted a rose garden, he takes it so far, that he is able to have DELTA Force approved or 'pushed through' as his main responsibility. Finally, Beckwith prepares an entire group for the Iranian hostage crisis and then after this, succeeds in getting approval for a Special Forces counter terrorist group in the US Army.



Interpersonal relations

The author makes a number of remarks about the relationships that he has with others during the book. One of the main points is acknowledging how much interpersonal relations matter. He writes of this as a man. He writes of the camaraderie between himself and the other men as peers, as soldiers slogging it out in the field. He writes of how much it matters to him whether he trusts and likes a senior officer or not. When he does not, it bothers him a great deal; the reverse is also true. Charlie Beckwith also writes about the men who serve under him. He worries about them. He develops affection and cares for them as the norm. He looks out for them as standard practice. He was not faking it to the people who followed him, just as he trusted that the people over him to trust and care for him.

Another facet of this is that it affects his progress in the service. Part of what he does is because he wants to in the sense of being goal driven. However, some of what he does is caused by who will work with him, and who can use him at any given time. One example of this is Lt. Miley's ability to make the most of Beckwith as an underling—this led to him being an operations officer, and it happened because Miley valued something that he did. This was especially important at a time when he had been cut off from other support.

Of course, Beckwith also writes about his family. In this case, he means his partner-lover and children. In this case, this takes the traditional form of married people. Much of his life is nontraditional, however. Beckwith, who readily writes about his love for both his wife and his children, does things like go away for months or so at a time. He does this to his woman and to his own children more than once. He takes the trouble to write, by implication that he does not have extramarital romantic or sexual involvements either when he is with his family or apart from them. Only some women can or will be able to tolerate that and be happy and stay married. Charlie Beckwith was fortunate—he married a woman who could stand the long separations.



Style

Perspective

The perspective of the author is quite discernible. In this case, this is apt to be a good thing, as he does not pretend to write the impartiality of a calibrating scale but presents himself as a real man with a sense of worldly sensibility about the entire matter. He describes himself as "an emotional man" more than once during the book. Again, this isn't necessarily wrong, but when his feelings are bad, they are more likely to cause a problem. When he cares and is helpful, protective and warm-hearted whether to his colleague, relatives, or friends, then he expresses his feelings and they are perceived as great, rather than troubling.

The author is a married man who comes across as committed and content that he is, and confident that his wife is also committed. He gives the impression that when he is with them, he exerts some kind of authority, control, and support and yet he is away so much that he obviously needs and expects his wife to be incredibly independent and able to get along without him for daily running of the family. It seems that he probably sent plenty of money to his wife and kids while he was away fighting the enemy in Viet Nam and while running the training school.

He is evidently a man of the first half of the 20th century. One can tell by the way he refers to "Indian country," as enemy territory and perhaps by his use of the phrase "the wife and children," but in the latter case maybe this won't give a sense of the century he is in. He refers to mechanized troops, and uses terms relevant to the time in which he is commenting about.

He is an American male and both of these characteristics show very clearly throughout the book.

Tone

The tone of the book is descriptive. By the end, the readers can see how one thing led to the next, but from the beginning of the book, it isn't clear at all. The author blends a story-telling ability with a hidden element of teaching. There are numerous chapters that in fact very clearly explain how it is that the plan for the Iranian hostage rescue was developed and carried out.

The tone is also mainly holistic. There are several things that a reader can learn from reading this book depending upon what he or she most wants to know.

Structure

The book is laid out rather straightforwardly. There is a long sequence of short chapters. Most books of this length do not have 47 chapters. Each of these chapters covers a meaningful event. For many written works this would be inappropriate but in this case, it's fine.

The book begins close to the time of the Iranian hostage rescue attempt. Then it flashes back in time, all the way back to the 1960s. The author then takes readers on a brief journey through the late sixties and seventies. This takes up the majority of the book. For those who wanted a thorough explanation and who wish to see what it is he is trying to accomplish, these chapters are very handy. For those who do not, readers will wonder why this is an entire book rather than a much shorter piece of writing such as a pamphlet.

In terms of one of the author's objectives, the book provides an excellent account of the process he has gone through in an effort to found and nurture a counter terrorist group within the Special Operations of the Army.



Quotes

"Survivors of the Uwharrie selection course then underwent careful psychological scrutiny and evaluation," (p. 124).

"See, Sergeant, you really haven't told me anything. Think a few minutes and tell me some of your unique skills...PAUSE...'Sir, I'm pretty good with locks.' 'You are? How good?' 'Call So-n-So and ask him,' 'I will. You're dismissed,'" (p. 125).

"Plei Mei during the siege. Major Charles Thompson (lower right corner) talks to a forward air controller who is circling above the camp. A napalm strike has just been brought in on the north slope," (p. photographic leaf between pages 54 & 55).

"The Vietnamese began to want to walk too fast, to take shortcuts, to move through some open areas," (p. 60).

"He wanted to kill some bad guys and he wanted to look good," (p. 61).

"Our concept of a low-visibility counterterrorist action was viewed as a nonilluminated night attack involving a company size force (Delta) which infiltrated the target area in civilian clothes with unique weapons and equipment," (p. 162).

"Our salesman, the lieutenant colonel who didn't know the difference between a parachute and a pillowcase, was beautiful," (p. 163).

"I was looking for only thirty or thirty-five men to start with," (p. 123).

"On the Delta side there was a sergeant ... the men called No Lips. He was a very fit senior noncommissioned officer," (p. 160).

"The RH-53D is the largest helicopter the military's inventory," (p. 216).

"One by one, the problems began to assume manageable proportions," (p. 217).

"The other vehicle would carry Colonel Beckwith on a reconnaissance of the route to the embassy," (p. 255).



Topics for Discussion

Do you feel that Americans have the right to exert such influential pressures both overtly and covertly in other nations?

Which of the ranks seem most appealing to you given what you have read. Not everyone will want the top positions, but some really will. Support your choice.

Agree or disagree with Charlie's idea for a permanent counter terrorist Special Ops force.

What do you like most about Charlie Beckwith based upon reading this book?

Do you feel it was beneficial for Beckwith to provide so much background of the mission? Defend your answer.

How long do you think it took the American military to train helicopter pilots to be able to handle Middle Eastern conditions, especially for combat conditions? Explain your answer.

How important is the role of training to the Iranian hostage rescue attempt?

Do you feel the mission did or did not fail because of the helicopters in the Middle East issue?