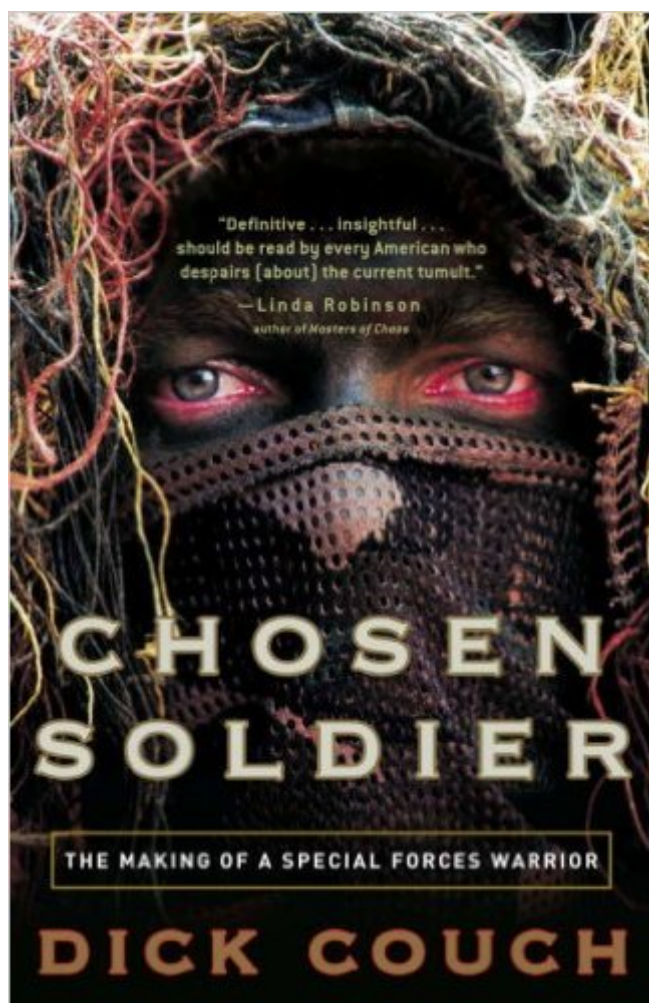


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Chosen Soldier: The Making Of A Special Forces Warrior



Synopsis

An unprecedented view of Green Beret training, drawn from the year Dick Couch spent at Special Forces training facilities with the Army's most elite soldiers. In combating terror, America can no longer depend on its conventional military superiority and the use of sophisticated technology. More than ever, we need men like those of the Army Special Forces—the legendary Green Berets. Following the experiences of one class of soldiers as they endure this physically and mentally exhausting ordeal, Couch spells out in fascinating detail the demanding selection process and grueling field exercises, the high-level technical training and intensive language courses, and the simulated battle problems that test everything from how well SF candidates gather operational intelligence to their skills at negotiating with volatile, often hostile, local leaders. Chosen Soldier paints a vivid portrait of an elite group, and a process that forges America's smartest, most versatile, and most valuable fighting force.

Book Information

Paperback: 416 pages

Publisher: Three Rivers Press; Reprint edition (March 25, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0307339394

ISBN-13: 978-0307339393

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.9 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars See all reviews (160 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #89,043 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #182 in Books > History > Military > Intelligence & Espionage #898 in Books > History > Military > United States

Customer Reviews

I believe this is the first comprehensive look at the entire U.S. Army Special Forces selection, qualification and training process; certainly the most updated (as of around 2004-5). Couch, a former Navy SEAL, is full of praise for the abilities and character of those young sergeants and junior officers who earn their Green Beret. And while the prose at times lags with over emphasis on procedure, it is still a fascinating look at a world very few of us will ever experience. The main strength of the book is that it's more than an anecdotal telling of what these candidates had to go through. Couch also explores what the SF cadre instructors and trainers bring to the process as well. For instance, I was surprised to learn that there was little of the shouting and hazing that I

suppose I'd expect to read about. Instead, Couch shows that throughout all four Phases, the cadre sergeants and officers are extremely considerate AND dedicated military professionals. Although this kind of experience is no longer for me, I believe this is an excellent book for those contemplating a military career in Special Forces. Couch spends a lot of time on each Phase, as well as each Special Forces specialty (communications, engineering, weapons, medical, etc.). There's also a section devoted to the preparation officers undergo to become ODA leaders, although I felt this was where Couch was at his most dryly procedural, whereas I wanted to read more about their field exercises. Finally, the book concludes with a satisfying overview of Robin Sage, the final Phase IV unconventional wargame exercise. Strongly recommended.

Ex- Navy SEAL Dick Couch provides an excellent narrative of Army Special Forces Selection and Training in 'Chosen Soldier.' Mr. Couch follows a group of U.S. Army 18-XRay Special Forces recruits through all phases of their long road to earn the Green Beret and serve with some of the best soldiers in the world. Much like 'The Warrior Elite,' and 'The Finishing School,' Mr. Couch provides detailed, word-for-word descriptions of training scenarios, snarling cadre members, and relentless physical and mental trials. I highly recommend 'Chosen Soldier,' to anyone who is either interested in becoming a Special Forces soldier, or is interested in the selection and training process of these elite men.

I am a civilian female with no special military expertise, and I found this to be an excellent read. Mr. Couch is careful to explain the confusing military slang and acronyms, and he has a knack for anecdotes and details that bring the trainees to vivid life. I highly recommend the book, and I thank God that this nation still raises up the kind of men who strive to wear the Green Beret.

I think this is Couch's best book! As a person with a big interest in the subject matter and some knowledge to begin with, I was instantly pulled into the stories of these men heading down the road to a Green Beret. I was impressed, though by the exceptional job the author does at making it understandable for readers without a lot of prior military knowledge. It has everything you expect from a Couch book: an insider view at a super-secret society, people you can be proud to have out fighting for us, detail and excitement that is engaging throughout. This is a great book in support of the guys laying down their lives without getting trapped in political rhetoric. I highly recommend Chosen Soldier

A really interesting look into the making of special force soldiers. The author, Dick Couch, is a former SEAL himself, so he knows what it takes to make our toughest military members. He was, I think, given unprecedented access to Green Beret recruit training, and Couch offers a fine first-person, memoir-like description of all he saw as the recruits arrived at Fort Bragg, NC for what was a grueling training process. After reading Couch's book, I'm convinced of a few things: 1) that US Army Special Forces soldiers are some of the toughest, smartest, and hardest working people on the planet; 2) that it is not easy to create new SF soldiers - it's costly, time consuming, and few people have what it takes to be SF soldiers; 3) that we need more of these folks considering the counterinsurgency wars we may be involved in over the next couple of decades, and they are not easy to create (see #2); and 4) that our political leaders should have been much more knowledgeable of these points before opting to invade Iraq. What some people are willing to take on for their country is amazing, and to know that there are Americans who already have it all and yet complain that they need tax cuts is pathetic. Anyway, Couch did a great job and offered a valuable window into the tip of the spear of American efforts to defeat terrorism.

If you are thinking about going into Special Forces, this might be a very useful book, but don't expect to be wowed by the writing. As a lay person who is just curious about the training, I did not find it as compelling as other similar books. There are some nuggets in here that make it worth the read if you're interested in the topic. The author choose to organize the book by his journey through the training as a journalist/observer. I think it would have been better if he took himself out of the equation after the introduction. He has bonafides that you need to know, but after that, I don't think his experience makes a good organizing principle for the narrative. Better to pick a few of the individual soldiers and focus on their journeys.

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