



### Searching for a Winner: History of the Army's Delta Force: Col. Charlie Beckwith; Abram's Early-Day Delta Force

- 44- The story of the development of Delta Force from Col. Beckwith's vision to its deployment in the Iran hostage rescue mission is told in his book, *Delta Force*, which is still available in paperback. It details the long, difficult road the Colonel had to ride through bureaucratic red tape in order to bring Delta into existence. And once done, its first major mission was flawed because President Carter and military brass adulterated the very definition of Delta by inserting others into Operation Eagle Claw. The whole idea behind Delta was to develop and deploy an uniquely qualified, full-time unit of special-force operatives who could respond instantly to terrorist incidents. When the Pentagon insisted on incorporating the Marines and Navy helicopters into Delta's mission and Jimmy Carter agreed, Desert One went bust.
- 45- Beckwith's description of the purpose of Delta and how it is different from other Special Forces is brought out in his account of how Delta won its initial approval from Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Bernard W. Rogers.
- 46- In order to get to Rogers, Colonel Beckwith had to first sell several Army generals on the idea: Maj. Gen. Robert "Barbed Wire Bob" Kingston, Commander of the JFK Center for Military Assistance at Fort Bragg; Gen. William DePuy \de-pūe`, Commander of the Training and Doctrine Command at Fort Benning; Gen. Frederick "Fritz" Kroesen \krō`sen`, Commander of Army Combat and Combat Support Forces at Fort McPherson; and Lt. General Edward C. "Shy" Meyer, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans at the Pentagon.
- 47- The key presentation was before Gen. Kroesen and it is in this presentation that the unique nature of Delta is explained. The spokesman for Delta was Lt. Col. John Devens, who knew nothing about Special Forces but had the ability to take complex subjects and eloquently present them to decision makers. He worked with Beckwith and his team for months and his presentations were always flawless in content and delivery, a necessity since some on Gen. Kroesen's staff were protective of the Army Rangers and thus opposed to another Special Forces outfit. The presentation before Gen. Kroesen gives us the details needed for our study:

#### Beckwith & Knox, *Delta Force*, 100, 103-105:

One morning in early May 1977, Gen. Kingston, Col. John Devens, and I went to Fort McPherson, which is in Atlanta and is headquarters for the Army Combat and Combat Support Forces Command, called FORSCOM. (pp. 100-101)

Our briefing was scheduled for 10:00 A.M. It began on time. Our salesman, the lieutenant colonel who didn't know the difference between a parachute and a pillowcase, was beautiful. He pointed out that nowhere in the United States armed services was there a small force of hand-picked volunteers who were thoroughly trained for the counter-terrorist job they were expected to undertake. Normally, in any infantry unit, the smallest integral force is a 40-man platoon, which is broken down into squads. Delta advocated a unique organization that used as its building blocks 4-man patrols. This was David Sterling's thesis when he designed the Special Air Service for the British during World War II. He argued for a 16-man troop flexible enough to permit it to be broken into two 8-man patrols, four 4-man patrols, or eight 2-man patrols. The secret, the key, was modules that could change easily within any situation. John Devens deftly described the number and variety of skills Delta required, particularly in terrorist scenarios: people who could get into buildings or planes held under siege, shooters and snipers, explosive experts, locksmiths, medics, electricians, drivers, men who could hot wire a Ford or a Ferrari, soldiers with skills to climb mountains or buildings, men who speak other languages, men with resolve who could operate decisively in the absence of orders. The void was pointed out. There was no unit in the military that could, with these unique characteristics and skills, act in the event of hostage situations and aircraft hijackings.

A single factor that sold the future Delta Force more than any other was terrorism. The unit was dedicated to coming to grips with it. One of the weaknesses in other organizations is that they are only part-timers in this field. Semipros or gifted amateurs, no matter what their individual abilities or potential are, can be no match for international terrorists. It takes full-time professionals who spend as much time on the subject as the enemy does. Our briefer acknowledged that the Rangers were primarily a commando-raid-type organization and were young in age. What was needed, he suggested, was not youth but mature professionals. Also, staff structure and intelligence-collecting mechanisms would be designed to handle terrorist incidents. Devens began to really warm up.

Suddenly—the briefing wasn't half over—General Kroesen interrupted, "I've heard enough." Oh, God, I thought. Here we were, dead in the water. Kroesen turned to Kingston, "Bob, you should have been doing these things long ago." Oh, wow! I thought. General DePuy's representative said, "My instructions, sir, are to ask if you will support this proposal when it's taken to Army Chief of Staff." General Kroesen stood up. "Absolutely," he said as he walked out of the briefing. (pp. 103-104)

Delta entered a critical period now. General DePuy had to make an appointment to get on the Chief's calendar. You just didn't do that tomorrow. We finally received word that that briefing was scheduled in the Pentagon for 2 June 1977. (p. 105)

- 48- When this date arrived Col. Beckwith accompanied General DePuy, General Kingston, General Meyer, General Kroesen, and Colonel Devens to Washington. Devens delivered his silver-tongued spiel and General Rogers, Army Chief of Staff, approved moving forward with Delta.
- 49- Now obviously Abram and his men were nowhere as sophisticated as the men who came to be known as Delta Force. But we see Abram prior to 2000 B.C. exhibit principles of military science that are still being used today.
- 50- He was wise enough to realize that he was a target for the opposition in the unseen war. He knew that he had divine protection but that this did not include overriding the volition of the benighted emissaries of the Dark Side.
- 51- Consequently, his unconditional love for Lot plus wisdom motivated Abram to set up a system through which he could keep tabs on his nephew.
- 52- This was not an invasion of Lot's privacy. All Abram wanted was information on Lot's safety. He recognized that he was in a cultural environment that posed a constant threat to both his physical and spiritual lives. And because of this decadent environment the entire Pentapolis was ripe for divine judgment.
- 53- Abram's wisdom therefore motivated him to assign one of his men as a G-2 agent in Sodom. This man became a fish. He had an occupation; he was known in the community, but managed to isolate himself from the popular fads of the day.
- 54- Thus, when justice retired north through the Jordan Valley, this operative made his way out of the area back to Hebron and reported in to Abram.
- 55- Abram's wisdom had already made the decision to conscript men from among those who worked on his ranch. He trained them in the strategy and tactics of warfare and equipped them with weapons.