

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AC-130 SPECTRE: A ground support aircraft used by the U.S. military, based on the C-130 cargo plane. AC-130s are armed with a 105mm howitzer, 40mm cannons, and 7.62mm miniguns, and are considered the premier close air support weapon of the U.S. arsenal.

Accuracy International: A British company producing high-quality precision rifles, often used for military sniper applications.

ACOG: Advanced Combat Optical Gunsight. A magnified optical sight designed for use on rifles and carbines made by Trijicon. The ACOG is popular among U.S. forces as it provides both magnification and an illuminated reticle that provides aiming points for various target ranges.

AQ: Al-Qaeda. Meaning “the Base” in Arabic. A radical Islamic terrorist organization once led by Osama bin Laden.

AQI: Al-Qaeda in Iraq. An Al-Qaeda-affiliated Sunni insurgent group that was active against U.S. forces. Elements of AQI eventually evolved into ISIS.

AT-4: Tube-launched 84mm anti-armor rocket produced in Sweden and used by U.S. forces since the 1980s. The AT-4 is a throwaway weapon: after it is fired, the tube is discarded.

ATF/BATFE: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. A federal law enforcement agency, formally part of the Department of

the Treasury, that doesn't seem overly concerned with alcohol or tobacco.

ATPIAL: Advanced Target Pointer/Illuminator Aiming Laser. A weapon-mounted device that emits both visible and infrared target designators for use with or without night observation devices. Essentially, an advanced military-grade version of the "laser sights" seen in popular culture.

BDA: Bomb/Battle damage assessment. The practice of assessing damage inflicted on a target from a stand-off weapon, most typically a bomb or air launched missile.

Benghazi: A city in the North African nation of Libya and the site of the 2012 attack on the U.S. consulate. The U.S. ambassador to Libya, a Foreign Service Information Management Officer, and two CIA Global Response Staff members (both former SEALs) were killed in the attack.

Beretta 92D: A double-action-only 9mm handgun that is a variant of the 92F used by much of the U.S. military. The 92D does not use a manual safety and its bobbed hammer cannot be manually cocked.

Beretta 92F: Double-action 9mm handgun that has been the standard-issue sidearm for the bulk of the U.S. military since 1985, as well as a favorite of action movie propmasters. In 2017, the U.S. Army selected the M17, manufactured by SIG Sauer, to replace the Beretta.

Blind Sheikh: Nickname for Omar Abdel-Rahman, who is currently serving a life prison sentence for his role in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing.

BUD/S: Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training. The six-month selection and training course required for entry into the SEAL teams, held in Coronado, California. Widely accepted as among the most brutal military selection courses in the world, with an average 80 percent attrition rate.

C-4: Composition 4. A plastic explosive compound known for its stability and malleability.

C-5: Lockheed Martin “Galaxy” aircraft used as a military transport.

The C-5 is one of the largest functional aircraft ever produced.

CH-47: Boeing “Chinook” twin-engine heavy-lift helicopter used by the

U.S. Army. Often used in Afghanistan’s mountains due to its high service ceiling, the Chinook is a large aircraft that resembles a flying school bus.

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency.

CJSOTF: Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force. A regional com-

mand that controls special operations forces from various services and friendly nations.

CRRC: Combat Rubber Raiding Craft. Inflatable “Zodiac-style” boats

used by SEALs and other maritime troops.

CZ-75: 9mm handgun designed in 1975 and produced in the Czech Re-

public.

Dam Neck: An annex to NAS Oceana near Virginia Beach, Virginia,

where nothing interesting, whatsoever, happens.

DCIS: Defense Criminal Investigation Service.

DEA: Drug Enforcement Administration.

Delta Force: A classic 1986 film starring Chuck Norris, title of the 1983

autobiography by the unit’s first commanding officer and popular name for the Army’s Special [REDACTED]

DOD: Department of Defense.

DOJ: Department of Justice.

Echols Legend: A best-quality hunting rifle designed and hand built by

gunmaker D’Arcy Echols of Millville, Utah. Considered by many to be the highest-quality sporting rifle ever made.

FFP: Explosively Formed Penetrator/Projectile. A shaped explosive

charge that forms a molten projectile used to penetrate armor. Such munitions were widely used by insurgents against coalition forces in Iraq.

- EMS:** Emergency Medical Services. Fire, paramedic, and other emergency personnel.
- EOD:** Explosive Ordnance Disposal. The military's explosives experts, who are trained to, among other things, disarm or destroy improvised explosive devices or other munitions.
- Eotech:** An unmagnified holographic gunsight for use on rifles and carbines, including the M4. The sight is designed for rapid target acquisition, which makes it an excellent choice for close-quarters battle. Can be fitted with a detachable 3x magnifier for use at extended ranges.
- FBI:** Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- FDA:** Food and Drug Administration.
- FOB:** Forward Operating Base. A secured forward military position used to support tactical operations. Can vary from small and remote outposts to sprawling complexes.
- Fobbit:** A service member serving in a noncombat role who rarely, if ever, leaves the safety of the Forward Operating Base.
- Frog Hog:** SEAL groupie. Frequently sighted in and around Coronado and Virginia Beach watering holes.
- Glock:** An Austrian-designed, polymer-framed handgun popular with police forces, militaries, and civilians throughout the world. Glocks are made in various sizes and chambered in several different cartridges.
- GPS:** Global Positioning System. Satellite-based navigation system that provides a precise location anywhere on earth.
- GRG:** Gridded Reference Graphic. An annotated aerial map or photograph with various sectors of areas of interest separated and identified by gridlines.
- Hell Week:** The crucible of BUD/S training. Five days of constant physical and mental stress with little sleep.
- HK416:** M4 clone engineered by the German firm of Heckler & Koch to operate using a short-stroke gas pistol system instead of the M4's di-

rect-impingement gas system. Used by select special operations units in the U.S. and abroad. May or may not have been the weapon used to kill Osama bin Laden.

HRT: Hostage Rescue Team. The FBI's elite counterterrorism and hostage rescue force, based out of Quantico, VA.

HUMINT: Human intelligence. Information gleaned through traditional human-to-human methods.

HVI/HVT: High-value individual/High-value target. An individual who is important to the enemy's capabilities and is therefore specifically sought out by a military force.

IED: Improvised explosive device. A homemade bomb, whether crude or complex, often used by insurgent forces overseas.

IR: Infrared. The part of the electromagnetic spectrum with a longer wavelength than light but a shorter wavelength than radio waves. Invisible to the naked eye but visible with night observation devices. Example: an IR laser aiming device.

ISIS: Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Radical Sunni terrorist group. Also referred to as ISIL. The bad guys.

ISR: Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.

JAG: Judge advocate general. Decent television series and the military's legal department.

JSOC: Joint Special Operations Command. A component command of SOCOM, [REDACTED].

Kaffir: an Arabic term used by Muslims to describe a subset of society who have read and rejected the message of the Qur'an; or, a derogatory term for a nonbeliever of Islam.

Langley: The Northern Virginia location where the Central Intelligence Agency is headquartered. Often used as shorthand for CIA.

Law of armed conflict: A segment of public international law that regulates the conduct of armed hostilities.

LAW rocket: M-72 Light Anti-armor Weapon. A disposable, tube-launched 66mm unguided rocket in use with U.S. forces since before the Vietnam War.

M-1911/1911A1: .45-caliber pistol used by U.S. forces since before World War I.

M-203: A 40mm single-shot grenade launcher that can be fit to the underside of the M4 carbine to provide an indirect fire capability.

M4: The standard assault rifle of the majority of U.S. military forces, including the U.S. Navy SEALs. The M4 is a shortened carbine variant of the M16 rifle that fires a 5.56x45mm cartridge. The M4 is a modular design that can be adapted to numerous configurations, including different barrel lengths.

MACV-SOG: Military Assistance Command, Vietnam–Special Operations Group. A joint special operations unit consisting primarily of Army special forces, Navy SEALs, and CIA personnel during the Vietnam War. Many of their missions remain highly classified to this day.

Mahdi Militia: An insurgent Shia militia, loyal to cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, that opposed U.S. forces in Iraq during the height of that conflict.

MBITR: AN/PRC-148 Multiband Inter/Intra Team Radio. A handheld multiband, tactical software-defined radio, commonly used by special operations forces to communicate during operations.

MIL DOT: A reticle-based system used for range estimation and long-range shooting, based on the milliradian unit of measurement.

MK 186: An intelligent two-way radio system designed to initiate explosive devices, including claymore mines.

Mk 23: A massive .45-caliber handgun adopted by SOCOM and produced by Heckler & Koch that epitomizes wasteful bureaucratic spending.

Mk 24 MOD 0: A .45-caliber handgun made by Heckler & Koch, used by SEALs. This handgun is often equipped with a sound suppressor or “silencer.”

Mk 48 MOD 1: A belt-fed 7.62x51mm light machine gun designed for

use by special operations forces. Weighing 18 pounds unloaded, the Mk-48 can fire 730 rounds per minute to an effective range of 800 meters and beyond.

NCIS: Naval Criminal Investigative Service. A federal law enforcement agency whose jurisdiction includes the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. Also a popular television program with at least two spin-offs.

NOD: Night observation device. Commonly referred to as “night vision goggles,” these devices amplify ambient light, allowing the user to see in low light environments. Special operations forces often operate at night to take full advantage of such technology.

NSW: Naval Special Warfare. The Navy’s special operations force, includes SEAL teams.

OH-58D: A now-obsolete helicopter, nicknamed the “Kiowa,” used by the U.S. Army for observation, utility, armed reconnaissance, and fire support operations.

OODA Loop: Observe/Orient/Decide/Act. A decision cycle theory developed by Colonel John Boyd of the U.S. Air Force.

P226: 9mm handgun made by SIG Sauer, the standard-issue sidearm for SEALs.

P229: A compact handgun made by SIG Sauer, often used by federal law enforcement officers, chambered in 9mm as well as other cartridges.

Pakistani Taliban: An Islamic terrorist group comprised of various Sunni Islamist militant groups based in the northwestern Federally Administered Tribal Areas along the Afghan border in Pakistan.

PETN: *P*entaerythritol *T*etra*N*itrate. An explosive compound used in blasting caps to initiate larger explosive charges.

PLF: Parachute landing fall. A technique taught to military parachutists to prevent injury when making contact with the earth. Round canopy parachutes used by airborne forces fall at faster velocities than other parachutes and require a specific landing sequence. More often than not ends up as feet-ass-head.

- PTSD:** Post-traumatic stress disorder. A mental condition that develops in association with shocking or traumatic events. Commonly associated with combat veterans.
- PVS-15:** Also known as the M953, a purpose-built ground operations binocular night observation device currently issued to members of U.S. Special Operations Command.
- PVS-18:** A night observation device that can be used as a handheld pocket scope, eye-mounted monocular, or weapon sight when mounted in conjunction with a laser or night-vision-compatible primary optic.
- QRF:** Quick Reaction Force, a contingency force on standby to assist operations in progress.
- RHIB/RIB:** Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat/Rigid Inflatable Boat. A lightweight but high-performance boat constructed with a solid fiberglass or composite hull and flexible tubes at the gunwale (sides).
- ROE:** Rules of engagement. Rules or directives that determine what level of force can be applied against an enemy in a particular situation or area.
- SAP:** Special Access Program. Security protocols that provide highly classified information with safeguards and access restrictions that exceed those for regular classified information. Really secret stuff.
- SCI:** Sensitive compartmented information. Classified information concerning or derived from sensitive intelligence sources, methods, or analytical processes. Often found on private basement servers in upstate New York or bathroom closet servers in Denver.
- Scouts and Raiders:** A joint Army-Navy maritime commando unit created after Pearl Harbor and distinguished through actions in the North African, European, and Pacific Theaters of World War II. Direct forefathers of today's SEALs.
- SEAL:** *SEa* Air and Land. The three environments in which SEALs operate. The U.S. Navy's special operations force.
- SERE:** Survival, Evasion, Resistance, Escape. A military training pro-

gram that includes realistic role-playing as a prisoner of war. SERE students are subjected to highly stressful procedures, sometimes including waterboarding, as part of the course curriculum.

SIGINT: Signals intelligence. Intelligence derived from electronic signals and systems used by foreign targets, such as communications systems, radars, and weapons systems.

SMU: Special Mission Unit. Elite special operations units that fall under the command of JSOC. If we told you any more, we'd have to kill you.

SOCOM: United States Special Operations Command. The Unified Combatant Command charged with overseeing the various Special Operations Component Commands of the U.S. Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force. Headquartered at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida.

Special Reconnaissance Team: NSW teams that conduct special activities, ISR, and provide intelligence support to the SEAL Teams.

SSE: Sensitive site exploitation. A term used to describe collecting information, material, and persons from a designated location and analyzing them to answer information requirements, facilitate subsequent operations, or support criminal prosecution. Basically, grabbing everything that looks important for later use.

S-Vest: Suicide vest. An explosive-packed garment worn on the body that turns a human into a deadly area weapon. A tactic employed frequently by insurgent and terrorist groups.

SWAT: Special Weapons And Tactics. Paramilitary law enforcement teams trained and equipped to respond to special incidents. Can vary wildly in terms of capability and effectiveness. Dog owners beware.

Taliban: An Islamic fundamentalist political movement and terrorist group in Afghanistan. U.S. and coalition forces have been at war with members of the Taliban since late 2001.

TDFD: Time Delay Firing Device. An explosive initiator that allows for detonation at a determined period of time. A fancy version of a really long fuse.

- TIC:** Troops In Contact. A firefight involving U.S. or friendly forces.
- TOC:** Tactical Operations Center. A command post for military operations. A TOC usually includes a small group of personnel who guide members of an active tactical element during a mission from a secured area.
- TOR Network:** A computer network designed to conceal a user's identity and location. TOR allows for anonymous communication.
- TS:** Top secret. Information the unauthorized disclosure of which reasonably could be expected to cause exceptionally grave damage to national security that the original classification authority is able to identify or describe. Can also describe an individual's level of security clearance.
- TST:** Time-sensitive target. A target requiring immediate response because it is highly lucrative, a fleeting target of opportunity, or it poses (or will soon pose) a danger to friendly forces.
- UAV:** Unmanned aerial vehicle. A fancy acronym for drones, which have become the staple of aerial imagery for law enforcement and military surveillance activities both inside the United States and abroad. UAVs can range vastly in both size and capability.
- UCMJ:** Uniform Code of Military Justice. Disciplinary and criminal code that applies to members of the U.S. military.
- VPN:** Virtual private network. A private network that enables users to send and receive data across shared or public networks using an encrypted tunnel to increase privacy and security.
- WARCOM/NAVSPECWARCOM:** United States Naval Special Warfare Command. The U.S. Navy's special operations force and the maritime component of United States Special Operations Command. Headquartered in Coronado, California, WARCOM is the administrative command for subordinate NSW groups comprising eight SEAL teams, one SEAL Delivery Vehicle (SDV) team, three Special Boat teams, and two Special Reconnaissance teams.