

James L. Holly, M.D.

Those Who Pay the Cost of Freedom and Health

By James L. Holly, MD

Your Life Your Health

The Examiner

June 29, 2017

Next Tuesday is July 4, 2017. It is the 241st anniversary of Independence Day of the United States of America. We have often associated our opportunity for maintaining our health with our freedom. Sometimes we become so comfortable with our freedom that we don't remember that our freedom was not won and that our freedom is not sustained without the dedication and courage of young men and women who step up and declare, "I will serve."

Since the Special Services Forces was formed in 1942 (dramatized in the movie, *The Devil's Brigade*), and particularly since the movie, *The Green Berets* (1968), America has known the name but seldom understood what our young men have endured to serve in this prestigious force.

This article is an introduction to the following book which details the training of a Green Beret, followed by the lyrics of and a link to a singing of the song, *The Ballad of the Green Beret*. For all Americans, the Green Beret Story is a source of pride; for some, it is a very personal story. *Chosen Soldier: The Making of a Special Forces Warrior* by Dick Couch (Crown Publishers, New York, 7007) tells the story of the Green Beret training.

"In combating terror, America can no longer depend on its conventional military superiority and the use of sophisticated technology. We are fighting guerrilla wars, against insurgents hidden in remote regions, often deep among the local population. In battles such as these, squadrons of billion-dollar bombers and naval fleets mean much less than on-the-ground intelligence and the ability to organize local force. That's why, more than ever before, we need men like those of the Army Special Forces - the legendary Green Berets.

"*In Chosen Soldier*, Dick Couch - a former Navy SEAL widely admired for his books about SEAL training and operations - offers an unprecedented view of the training of the Army Special Force warrior. Each year, several thousand enlisted men and several hundred officers volunteer for Special Forces training. Less than a quarter of those who apply will complete the course. *Chosen Soldier* spells out in fascinating detail the arduous regimen these men undergo - 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

they gather operational intelligence to their skills at negotiating with volatile, often hostile, local leaders.

“Green Berets are expected to be deadly in combat, yes, but their responsibilities go far beyond those of other Special Operations fighters; they’re taught to operate in foreign cultures, often behind enemy lines; to recruit, train, and lead local forces; to gather intelligence in hostile territory; to forge bonds across language and cultures. They must not only be experts in such fields as explosives, communications, engineering, and field medicine, but also be able to teach those skills to others. Each and every Green Beret must function as tactical combat leaders, negotiator, teacher, drill sergeant, and diplomat.

“These tasks require more than just physical prowess; they require a unique mix of character, intelligence, language skills, and - most of all - adaptability. It’s no wonder that the Green Berets’ training regimen is known as the hardest in the world. Drawing on his unprecedented access to the closed world of Army Special Forces training, Dick Couch paints a vivid, intimate portrait of these extraordinary men and the process that forges America’s smartest, most versatile, and most valuable fighting force.”

Ballad Of The Green Berets

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5WJJVSE_BE

As Written & Performed by SSgt Barry Sadler

Fighting soldiers from the sky
Fearless men who jump and die
Men who mean just what they say
The brave men of the Green Beret

Silver wings upon their chest
These are men, America's best
One hundred men we'll test today
But only three win the Green Beret

Trained to live, off nature's land
Trained in combat, hand to hand
Men who fight by night and day
Courage deep, from the Green Beret

Silver wings upon their chest
These are men, America's best
One hundred men we'll test today
But only three win the Green Beret

Back at home a young wife waits
Her Green Beret has met his fate

He has died for those oppressed
Leaving her this last request

Put silver wings on my son's chest
Make him one of America's best
He'll be a man they'll test one day
Have him win the Green Beret
The Green Beret

In World War II, after the Battle of Britain, Winston Churchill famously said, “never have so many owe so much to so few.” This is true of all who have served in all of the branches of the United States Armed forces, but it is uniquely true of these “special” warriors who offer themselves as our first and final defense of our freedom.

On July 4th, let us all acknowledge our debt to our military; let us all give thanksgiving for these brave young men.