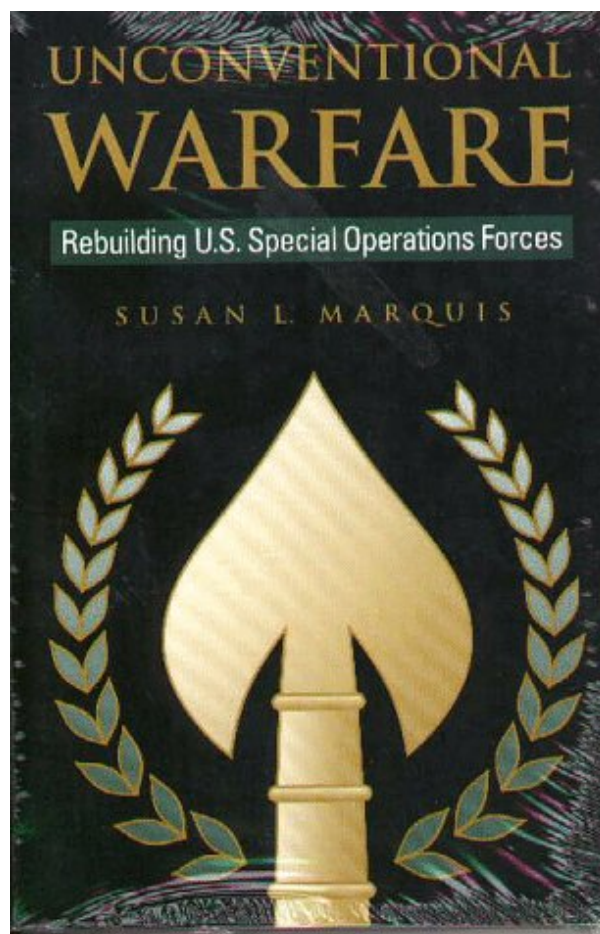
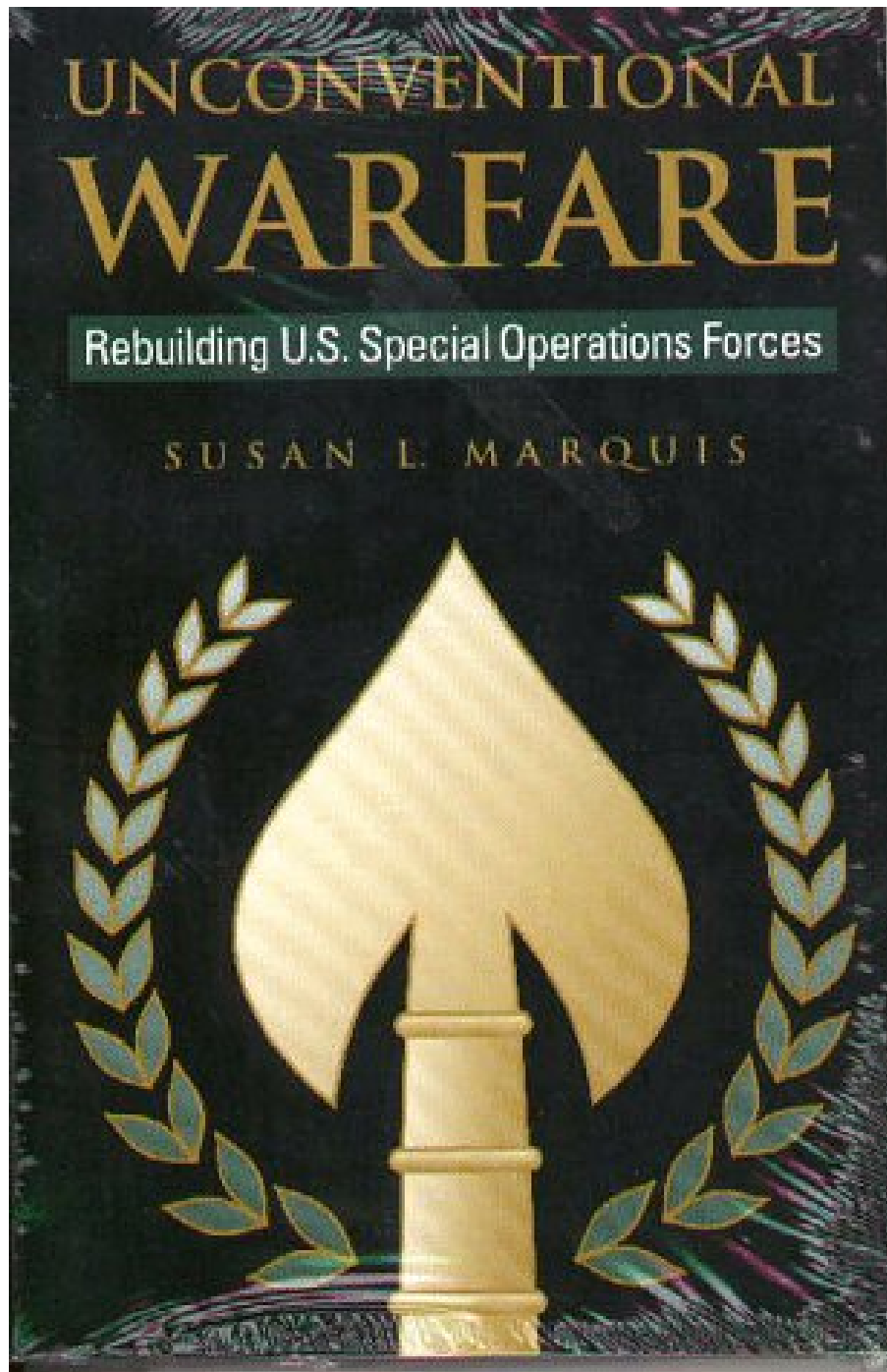


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From Library Journal

This remarkable case study, based on personal interviews, congressional records, and other official documents, shows how defense policy is made and how difficult it can be to implement. The primary focus is the decade-long effort to reform the U.S. special operations forces community. After a long struggle "of dramatic highs and lows," this process culminated in legislation creating the Special Operations Command (SOCOM) in 1987. Marquis, a Defense Department employee who first wrote this as a Ph.D. dissertation at Princeton, covers the catastrophic rescue mission in Iran in 1980, Grenada, Panama, Somalia, and Iraq. There are some graphic but brief combat scenes. This amazing story deserves our attention as much as any war. ?John J. Yurechko, Georgetown Univ., Washington, D.C.

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About the Author

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# **UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE: REBUILDING U.S. SPECIAL OPERATION FORCES (REDISCOVERING GOVERNMENT SERIES) BY SUSAN MARQUIS PDF**

For four decades after World War II, U.S. Special Operations Forces—including Army Special Forces, Navy SEALs, Air Force special operations aircrews and Special Tactics Group—suffered from mistrust and inadequate funding from the military services. They were nearly eliminated from the active force following the Vietnam War. But in the past fifteen years, special operations forces have risen from the ashes of the failed 1980 rescue of American hostages in Iran to become one of the most frequently deployed elements of the U.S. military. They are now adequately funded, better-equipped, and well-trained. Special operations forces are often the nation's first military response when faced with a crisis in today's uncertain and unstable international security environment.

What caused this dramatic turnaround? As this book shows, it was a long way from congressional outrage at TV images of burned bodies of U.S. servicemen in the Iranian desert to the establishment of a special operations force of nearly 45,000 active and reserve personnel. The drama of how this happened sheds light on how public policy is made and implemented. It illustrates the complex interaction between internal forces within the special operations community, as well as between the executive and legislative branches of the U.S. government. The implementation of legislation establishing a special operations capability is seen to rebuild and protect these forces to an extent never imagined by the early "quiet professionals."

While offering insights into how the U.S. government makes policy, Susan Marquis also offers a revealing look at the special operations community, including their storied past, extreme training, and recent operational experience that continues to forge their distinctive organizational mission and culture. She describes the decade-long struggle to rebuild special operations forces, resulting in new SOF organizations with independence that is unique among U.S. military forces, an independence approaching that of a new military service.

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From Library Journal

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Susan L. Marquis is a division director in the office of the Secretary of Defense in Program Analysis & Evaluation.

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##### Factual Errors Foul SPECWAR History

By James D. O'Dell

Whenever a scholarly researcher attempts indepth treatment of a complex subject, spanning decades of developments, it is critical to get the facts straight. This effort tosses some surprising curve balls with respect to events in World War II. A Scout and Raider team blasted the boom and net across the Sebou in November 1942? Hardly. The facts are covered in a number of excellent sources. Phil Bucklew was in charge of the program? Gracious! Where does this astounding misinformation come from? In Operation Torch, the scout boats stood off the designated landing beaches to mark the location, at night, guided by silhouettes of coastal features. Personnel did not physically lead troops ashore, as the author appears to suggest. Not even British Special Boat operators, who were more experienced in stealth recon, were allowed to go ashore in advance of the landing on the Mediterranean side. Moreover, the mission of the American scout boats was not reconnaissance in that operation.

Phil Bucklew was a lowly Navy trainee in the early period; specifically, a boat handler. He had nothing whatsoever to do with establishing the Ft. Pierce ATB program. Again, the facts concerning his remarkable, and controversial, military career are not difficult to access. Thus, it is hard to fathom how the author missed them.

This may seem a small thing to writers concerned mainly with the history of more recent developments in special warfare. To the cadre dedicated to delivering the truth about events in World War II, a fascinating time of programmatic struggle in special operations, it's discouraging to see an otherwise commendable researcher get it so wrong.

Jim O'Dell

9 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

##### An in-depth view of modern U.S. special operations

By A Customer

Susan Marquis does the special ops community a service by bringing us this account of its rebirth after the failed hostage rescue mission in 1980. Though some of the book seems burdened with detail and lacks the action-packed dialogue of most special operations literature, "Unconventional Warfare" brings to light the

budget battles and turf wars that have always been the curse of U.S. special operations. Whether the conventional services like it or not, special operations will play a vital role in the future of U.S. foreign policy and war-fighting. If we are to avoid the mistakes of the past, we would do well to read "Unconventional Warfare" and heed the lessons it contains. John Lance, AFSOC pilot

18 of 30 people found the following review helpful.

Pretty good, but...

By TE

The author did a thorough job of research and documentation, except in one area...Special Tactics. She nearly completely overlooked this SOF force. Additionally, she was completely off track when she stated "the primary mission of pararescue is emergency medical treatment". The primary mission of pararescue is PERSONNEL RECOVERY! Our job is combat and peacetime rescue...we are rescue technicians and specialize in TRAUMA medical treatment. We are not "medics". This is stated in numerous doctrine documents (both Air Force and Joint Doctrine)...how or why this happened is beyond me. ST is a continually overlooked force (both by design and circumstance) but to have this statement included in a book like this (dedicated to SOF) is unforgiveable...a serious lack of research in this area, and a serious hole in the literature. Overall the book was well written and right on target in so far as the "overall" SOF picture, but to nearly exclude ST is at best, unfortunate, and at worst, brings her other ideas and conclusions into question. Special Tactics Group is not even our designation...that is our "functional" headquarters...we are Special Tactics Squadrons.

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