



Cold Steel: The Knife in Army, Navy, and Special Forces Operations (Knives, Swords, and Bayonets: A World History of Edged Weapon Warfare)

Martina Sprague

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Knives have been carried with enthusiasm as sidearms to swords since antiquity, and as sidearms to firearms into modern day. Knife combat involves strategy and tactics. Historically serving several missions, the knife has proven a good infiltration weapon when silence must be preserved. It has been used for killing sentries, and has come in handy in close quarters on the large battlefield; for example, in foxholes where firearms or grenades would have been impractical. Soldiers recognized early the benefits of carrying a small and lightweight weapon that could be concealed on one's person, relied upon in the hand-to-hand fight, or deployed to finish an adversary at close range when one's firearm malfunctioned.

Although soldiers carry knives for a variety of purposes--not all knives are designed strictly for fighting but also double as tools such as trench digger, ration opener, parachute line cutter, etc.--this book concerns itself primarily with the role the knife has played as a combat weapon in near modern and modern warfare in the western world. Combat can further be broken down into the use of the knife to kill an enemy including sentry killings and trench raids, and the psychological use of the knife as a weapon of coercion or to send the enemy to flight. The book begins with a discussion of knife design and carry, which purpose it is to familiarize the reader with the many factors the knife smith must consider when crafting the weapon. Next it demonstrates the important function the knife has served as a battlefield sidearm in the different military branches. It then examines the effectiveness of the knife and how soldiers have trained to prepare for the possibility of using cold steel against an enemy combatant. The concluding remarks focus on the knife as a weapon of inspiration.

Knives, Swords, and Bayonets: A World History of Edged Weapon Warfare is a book series that examines the history of edged weapons in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas, and the Middle East and surrounding areas before gunpowder increased the distance between combatants. The book series takes a critical look at the relationship between the soldier, his weapon, and the social and political mores of the times. Each book examines the historical background and metallurgic science of the knife, sword, or bayonet respectively, and explores the handling characteristics and combat applications of each weapon. Save by purchasing the full 10-book series in a single paperback volume (538 pages). Look for Knives, Swords, and Bayonets: A World History of Edged Weapon Warfare (the full series).

The full series comprises the following books, which can be read in any order:

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3. Cold Steel: The Knife in Army, Navy, and Special Forces Operations
4. Japanese Swords: The Katana and Gunto in Medieval and Modern Japanese Warfare
5. Chinese Swords: The Evolution and Use of the Jian and Dao
6. Yatagan, Khanda, and Jamdhar: Swords and Sabers of Persia and India
7. Sickle Sword and Battle Axe: Edged Weapons of Ancient Egypt
8. Gladius and Spatha: Swords and Warfare in the Classical World

9. Longsword and Saber: Swords and Swordsmen of Medieval and Modern Europe
10. Pike, Halberd, and Bayonet: Sharp Weapons in Near Modern and Modern Warfare

Note that the books are written for those with an interest in exploring the historical beginnings of edged weaponry, how edged weapons have been used in war in different parts of the world, and the value the soldier attached to his weapon. Military, social, and political history is discussed. Arms collectors or others with detailed interest in the finer points of weaponsmithing may want to look for books that are more heavily illustrated.

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