



Killer Elite: Completely Revised and Updated: The Inside Story of America's Most Secret Special Operations Team

By Michael Smith

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America's Most Secret Special Operations Team** By Michael Smith

**For the first time ever, the explosive truth behind the world's most secret
Special Operations organization**

A top-secret U.S. Army Special Operations unit has been running covert missions all over the world, from leading death squads to the hideout of drug baron Pablo Escobar to capturing Saddam Hussein and, in one of the greatest special operations missions of all time, helping to track down al-Qa'eda leader Osama bin Laden. "The Activity," as it became known to insiders, has achieved near-mythical status, even among the world's Special Operations elite. Hidden from the politicians and the government bean counters, the Activity has been carrying out deniable operations, preparing the way for Delta and SEAL Team Six.

Now journalist Michael Smith gets inside this clandestine military team to expose their explosive history and secrets. Smith has spoken to many former members of the Activity and reveals the incredible truth behind the world's most secret Special Operations organization, a unit that is at the forefront of the War on Terror.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Former British intelligence officer Smith (*The Emperor's Codes*) shines a light on one of the U.S. Army's blackest agencies and best-kept secrets, the Intelligence Support Activity—aka the Activity—in this extensively researched and crisply written exposé. The Activity was established, after the failed attempt to rescue the American hostages in Iran in 1980, as "a dedicated special operations intelligence unit" to provide signals, imagery and human intelligence to other black units: e.g., the army's Delta Force. Although opposed by army traditionalists, the Activity proved itself in operations from El Salvador to Iraq, playing important roles in tracking down Colombian drug czar Pablo Escobar, Somali warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed and several prominent Bosnian war criminals. Since 9/11 and Operation Iraqi Freedom have exposed the shortcomings of U.S. intelligence, the size and scope of the Activity has, according to the author, "dramatically increased." Drawing on recently declassified documents and confidential interviews with key participants, Smith has produced an important primer for anyone hoping to understand the (usually quiet) successes and the (well-documented) failures of U.S. intelligence in the last 25 years. 16 pages color photo insert. (Mar.)

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From [Booklist](#)

A British journalist specializing in defense topics offers a readable, useful addition to the literature on American special operations forces. During the expansion of special operations forces in the 1980s, a secret group given the code name Intelligence Support Activity was charged with the primary function of gathering intelligence. It has played a valuable though unpublicized role in both Iraq wars, in antiterrorist operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere, and in the war on drugs. Its operatives can also fight—very well—as and when necessary. This book is finally a portrait of the unit's founder, Jerry Ryan, who had the usual spec-ops specialist's trouble with the brass. But his unit, now expanded to regimental strength, seems likely to remain on U.S. Army rolls, and military buffs and authorities may some day rank Ryan with Charles Beckwith, the founder of Delta Force. *Roland Green*

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Review

"An extensively researched and crisply written exposé . . . An important primer for anyone hoping to understand the successes and failures of U.S. intelligence in the last twenty-five years." ?*Publishers Weekly*

"Well written and authoritatively sourced, *Killer Elite* is the first detailed account of a Special Operations unit that Smith regards as America's most effective." ?*Sunday Telegraph (UK)*

Users Review

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