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Publisher Caters to War Buffs

By ANTHONY RIPLEY
Special to The New York Times

BOULDER, Colo., April 6—
“The simplest and surest way to dispose of guards noiselessly is to kill them with an ax. Do not use the sharp edge but the blunt end of the ax. Hit the guard obliquely with all your strength between the small of the back and loins or between the shoulder blades below the neck. Even in the dark you will be able to hit the place easily and without missing.”

This quotation is from page 36 of a do-it-yourself book on guerrilla warfare published in 1965 by one of the nation's most unusual publishers, Paladin Press.

The tiny publishing house, formerly called Panther Publications, Inc., operates from a cluttered second-story office next to a shopping center in Boulder. It has just published its latest book, a \$15.95 volume titled, “Silencers, Snipers and Assassins, an overview of whispering death,” by J. David Truby.

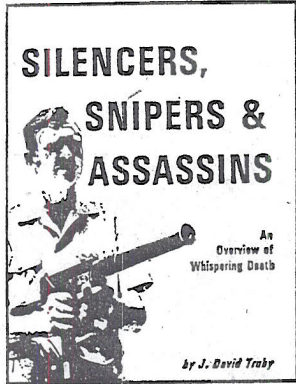
According to Robert K. Brown, one of the partners in Paladin, the new book is doing well because it is one of the few available on the function and use of small arms silencers. If 2,000 copies are sold, it will be a runaway best-seller by Paladin's standards.

A Former Captain

Sitting in his office in a T-shirt and leopard camouflaged trousers, the 39-year-old former captain in the Army Special Forces says that he is “barely scratching out a living from Paladin's 41 titles.”

He supplements his income with work as a licensed private detective, a few adventures as a soldier of fortune, some writing for magazines and newspapers and work on construction projects.

Mr. Brown, a political conservative, has a master's degree in political science from the University of Colorado.



Dust cover from the latest Paladin Press book.

His partner in Paladin, Peder C. Lund, is also a former Special Forces captain and sometimes soldier of fortune who buys and sells real estate on the side.

Piled around the office are cartons filled with books, some of them originals but most of them reprints of Army manuals from the United States and abroad. The subjects are generally demolitions, warfare and military weapons and tactics.

The book on guerrilla warfare, called “Total Resistance,” is by Maj. H. von Dach. It was first published by the Central Committee of the Swiss Non-commissioned Officers Association and has been one of Paladin's better sellers.

It was written to tell civilians in Switzerland how to organize and carry out guerrilla warfare in the event their tiny nation is ever overrun by an enemy.

Other Reprints Listed

Paladin also publishes reprints of such diverse books as “How to be a Good Communist,” by Liu Shao-chi, “The U.S. Army Sniper Training Manual,” a 1956 edition of the “Handbook of the Irish Republican Army,” the United States Army's “Combat in Russian Forests and Swamps” and “Riot and Civil Emergency Guide for City and County Officials,” by Raymond M. Momboisse.

In 1970, Mr. Brown's publications came to the attention of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, a unit of the Government Operations Committee that is headed by Senator John L. McClellan, Arkansas Democrat.

Mr. Brown told the committee

that he was not intentionally supplying either right wing or left wing extremists in the United States, though some of the publications had got into their hands.

Also, he told the committee, such publications are easily available as military surplus.

The result of the investigation, he said, was that some Army manuals became classified as secret documents. But that was an effort in futility for the most part, he added, because much of the now-classified material is available in older manuals now being sold as surplus.

A brass plate mounted on Mr. Brown's office wall bears a remark made by the Prussian military strategist of the early 19th century, Karl von Clausewitz: “Against stupidity, even the gods themselves battle in vain.”

Bufs of Warfare

Asked if he felt that selling books on guerrilla warfare added to civil disorder in the United States, he said:

“I feel I should be no more concerned about that than the auto dealer who sells a car that runs somebody down. The people who buy these books—the vast majority—are buffs of guerrilla and unconventional warfare. They're just the same as the buffs of the Civil War or World War I.”

Book orders also come, he said, from police departments, military men, bookstores and persons overseas.

Mr. Brown, still active in the Army Reserve, spent 15 months in Vietnam. He was a Special Forces team leader on the Cambodian border, where he was wounded.

Although his personal politics are conservative, he went to Cuba shortly after Fidel Castro had taken over and brought back a copy of “150 Questions for a Guerrilla,” by Gen. Alberto Bayo, who trained top Cuban revolutionaries. Mr. Brown had the book translated, and it was his first publication.

Mr. Brown was one of the leaders of the parachute medical team that jumped into the Peruvian mountains following a severe earthquake there in 1970.

Since 1967, he has been working on a book on Central Intelligence Agency operations in the Caribbean area.