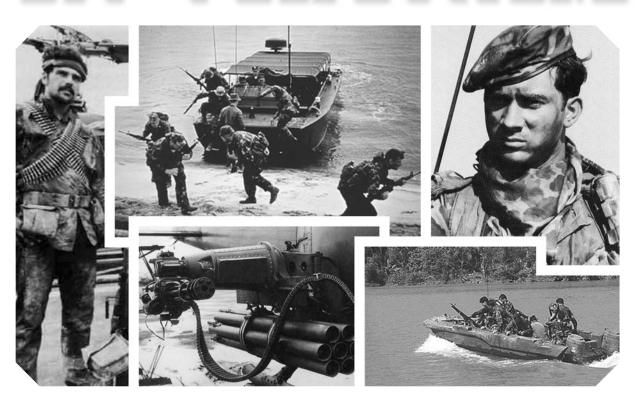
(GURPS)

Fourth Edition

MANNELLY



Written by HANS-CHRISTIAN VORTISCH **Edited by ANDREW DAWSON**

An e23 Sourcebook for GURPS®

STEVE JACKSON GAMES



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Bibliographies. Many of our books have extensive bibliographies, and we're putting them online – with links to let you buy the books that interest you! Go to the book's web page and look for the "Bibliography" link.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set*, *Fourth Edition*. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

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Introduction



"The great battleground for the defense and expansion of freedom today is the whole southern half of the globe – Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East – the lands of the rising peoples. Their revolution is the greatest in human history. They seek an end to injustice, tyranny, and exploitation. More than an end, they seek a beginning."

- President John F. Kennedy, Special Message to the Congress, 1961

"I'm not sure everything I did . . . in the Teams was totally admirable or commendable in some people's eyes, but there were some basic questions I asked myself that were answered

About the Author

Hans-Christian "Grey Tiger" Vortisch studied languages in Berlin and London.

He began writing as a freelancer for *GURPS* in 2001. He authored or co-authored *GURPS Covert Ops, Modern Firepower, Special Ops, Third Edition, WWII: Motor Pool*, and several shorter *WWII* publications. He contributed material to numerous other *GURPS* books.

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Hans has been an avid gamer since 1983. His nongaming interests include science fiction, history, cinema, and punk rock. He lives in Berlin.

He never goes for a swim.

to my satisfaction. I met some of the most dedicated, interesting, and genuine people that I have ever run with in my life . . . "

- Dwight Deagle (SEAL Team One), The Men behind the Trident

SEALs in Vietnam is a supplement to **GURPS Special Ops**, set not in the high-tech 21st century, but in the deadly jungles of Vietnam during the 1960s and early 1970s.

SEALs in Vietnam has everything you need to play one of the U.S. Navy's elite warriors during the Vietnam War (1961-1975). It includes a detailed history of the Teams during the era, new SEAL templates (revised for **GURPS** Fourth Edition), contemporary special equipment including weapons and vehicles, and much detail on both historical operations and how to make up your own.

This book deals with a single aspect of the Vietnam War – how U.S. Navy SEALs fought in it. It doesn't cover other U.S. or Allied troops other than as NPCs, let alone the Vietnamese side. As such, *SEALs in Vietnam* is biased. It cannot provide an even-handed history of a tragic conflict that dragged on for over a decade. Instead, it provides a background for heroic play in a high-speed, furious-action environment.

In addition to historical information, *SEALs in Vietnam* is also designed to give you suggestions how to use SEAL characters in a *GURPS Horror* or *Infinite Worlds* campaign (including *Black Ops* and *Technomancer*) in the same timeframe. Also, this supplement is compatible with e23's *Funny New Guys*, a *Technomancer* adventure set in Vietnam.

GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition is required to make full use of the information provided. Any of the various editions of **GURPS High-Tech, Martial Arts,** and **Special Ops** will be useful, but are not required.

CHAPTER ONE

SEA, AIR, LAND

I didn't ask for this war. But I felt should do my duty, so I volunteered for the Navy and later for the unit that seemed the most interesting. Training was brutal: a blur of misery, sore muscles, and lack of sleep – but also of camaraderie and high spirits. When we graduated, almost everyone in our platoon **really** wanted to go to 'Nam. We were keen to prove ourselves and to put to use what we had learned. And to show the Commies, of course. We would learn that there were things worse than communism.

Not much later we were up to our hips – and sometimes our necks – in brackish water every other night from late afternoon until early in the morning. Our squad was patrolling back from an uneventful recon mission when it happened. I had just peed my pants – no need to open the fly when you're already wet and stinking – and was silently cursing the LAW rocket that kept poking into my kidneys, when Dave, our point man, started firing and screaming simultaneously. I didn't think about it at the time, but he wasn't supposed to be screaming like that.

Anyway, we emptied our guns in all directions. I was rear security and couldn't actually see what was happening, but I laid down suppressive fire with my Stoner anyway, going through most of a 150-round belt. I heard Chief Miller's LAW detonating. Then Mr. Rochas, our Patrol Leader, ordered a retreat. We weren't far from the boat. When we boarded, I noticed that Dave, carried by hulking Frankie Fisher, was severely wounded; his left arm was missing. Gieng, our Vietnamese interpreter, was holding tightly onto his M16 and visibly shaking . . .



HISTORY

From its origins as a tiny offshoot of the Navy's famous Underwater Demolition Teams to becoming one of the most effective fighting units of the Vietnam War, the U.S. Navy SEALs were involved in the conflict in Southeast Asia for 10 years.

THE FORERUNNERS (1942-1961)

Who am I, Sir? A Frogman am I. A UDT man I will be 'till I die. For its Hoo-yah! tigaree, we're the men of UDT. Damn, bimbam, altogether for Uncle Sam.

- Traditional

Starting in August 1942, select U.S. Army and Navy personnel were trained as amphibious Scouts and Raiders (see *GURPS WWII: Hand of Steel*). Their mission was to reconnoiter landing beaches, and eventually to guide waves

of landing assault troops. The Scouts and Raiders were commissioned in October 1942 and first saw combat in November 1942 during Operation TORCH, the first landings on the North African coast. Scouts and Raiders continued to assist the landings in Europe as well as in the Pacific.

In June 1943, in preparation for the inevitable amphibious landings on the European coasts during World War II, the U.S. Navy commissioned the Naval Combat Demolition Unit (NCDU), mainly recruited from salvage divers. It took part in Operation HUSKY, the Allied landing in Sicily. The veterans of this operation returned to the U.S. to train more men for Operation OVERLORD, the Normandy landing on D-Day. Their primary task was to destroy underwater obstacles along the landing beaches (see *GURPS WWII: Dogfaces*).

Distinct from the NCDUs were the Underwater Demolition Teams (UDT), the first of which was commissioned in December 1943. The UDTs mainly saw service in the Pacific. Aside from demolitions, their main task was scouting and Unarmed Combat Instructor (+8 points): You can train others in unarmed combat. The Combative Measures Instructor Course ("Judo School") offered by the USAF taught judo with some elements taken from aikido, karate, and basic self-defense (see *GURPS Martial Arts*). Increase Brawling to 14 (DX+1) [1]; add Judo (H) DX-1 [2]-12 and Teaching (A) IQ-1 [1]-12; as well as the techniques Arm Lock (A) [1]-13; Breakfall (A) [1]-13; and Disarming (Brawling) (H) [2]-15. Individual SEALs attended the course – others sought instruction in private *dojos*, or studied tae kwon do with

South Korean military instructors while in Vietnam. There was also a judo club at the Naval Academy.

Others: There were many diving and parachuting-related courses that could provide familiarity with various Parachuting/TL7 techniques (such as HALO, p. 16), or special Scuba/TL7 and Diving Suit/TL7 equipment (p. 24). There were also dedicated Armoury/TL7 (Small Arms) and Immediate Action (Guns/TL) (see *GURPS High-Tech*) courses offered by Colt, Smith & Wesson, Cadillac Gage (for the *Stoner Weapon System*, pp. 19-20), and others.

ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES, AND SKILLS

This section discusses advantages, disadvantages, and skills as they apply to SEALs PCs during their tenure in Vietnam. As always, the GM has the last word on any interpretations, enhancements, and so forth in his campaign.

ADVANTAGES

Every SEAL is required to take Fit and Security Clearance. See *GURPS Special Ops* for a detailed list of additional desirable advantages for a special operations character. Common advantages are Breath-Holding, Combat Reflexes, Daredevil, Fearlessness, Flexibility, Gunslinger, Hard to Kill, Hard to Subdue, High Pain Threshold, Luck, Perfect Balance, Reputation, Single-Minded, Temperature Tolerance, Very Fit, and Weapon Bond (see *GURPS Fantasy*, *GURPS High-Tech*, or *GURPS Martial Arts*).

Military Rank

see pp. B29-30

Use the table below for the specific rank titles used by the U.S. Navy at the time. Senior and Master Chief Petty Officers as well as Lieutenant Commanders were rare and seldom deployed in the field. The two Teams were each commanded by a Lieutenant Commander. SEAL officers and enlisted fraternized freely.

MR	Pay Grade	Rank
MR 0	E-3	Seaman (SN)*
MR 1	E-4	Petty Officer Third Class (PO3)*
MR 1	E-5	Petty Officer Second Class (PO2)*
MR 1	E-6	Petty Officer First Class (PO1)*
MR 2	E-7	Chief Petty Officer (CPO)*
MR 3	E-8	Senior Chief Petty Officer (SCPO)*
MR 4	E-9	Master Chief Petty Officer (MCPO)*
MR 3	O-1	Ensign (ENS)
MR 3	O-2	Lieutenant (Junior Grade) (LTJG)
MR 4	O-3	Lieutenant (LT)
MR 4	O-4	Lieutenant Commander (LCDR)

* The terms "Seaman" and "Petty Officer" are general titles and not used as such by all SEALs. Enlisted sailors had specific rank titles based on their rating and pay grade. Those below Petty Officer were divided by a general career path into Airman (AN), Fireman (FN), and Seaman (SN). Corpsmen have the Hospitalman (HM) rating.

Example: A SEAL with the Gunner's Mate rating would be a Seaman (SN) at MR 0, a Gunner's Mate Third to First Class (GM3-GM1) at MR 1, and a Chief Gunner's Mate (GMC) at MR 2. With the Machinist's Mate rating, he would be a Fireman (FN) at MR 0, a Machinist's Mate Third to First Class (MM3-MM1) at MR 1, and a Chief Machinist's Mate (MMC) at MR 2. A corpsman would be a Hospitalman (HM) at MR 0, a Hospitalman Third to First Class (HM3-HM1) at MR 1, and a Chief Hospitalman (HMC) at MR 2.

Note: For an optional treatment of the Military Rank structure that takes the subtler differences in grade into account, see Douglas Cole's *Pyramid* article "Ten . . . HUT!!!"

Reputation (Decorations)

see pp. B26-28

Many SEALs earned medals for distinguished service in Vietnam. Like most special operators, they were often modest about this. However, in full dress uniform, and to people in the know, certain medals provide a reaction bonus.

Medal of Honor: Reputation +4 (For valor; Military personnel of the U.S. and allied nations; All the time) [6]. *Notes:* Three SEALs earned the Medal of Honor in Vietnam. 6 points.

Navy Cross: Reputation +3 (For valor; Military personnel of the U.S. and allied nations; All the time) [5]. *Notes:* Five SEALs earned the Navy Cross. *5 points*.

Silver Star, multiple Bronze Stars with "V": Reputation +2 (For valor; Military personnel of the U.S. and allied nations; All the time) [3]. Notes: SEALs earned a total of 42 Silver Stars in Vietnam. 3 points.

Bronze Star with "V": Reputation +1 (For valor; Military personnel of the U.S. and allied nations; All the time) [1]. Notes: More than 400 Bronze Stars were earned by SEALs in Vietnam. 1 point.

Talent

see pp. B89-91

The standard talents of Outdoorsman and Smooth Operator are suitable for a SEAL. Specific Talents germane to this sourcebook follow.

Born Sailor: Boating, Knot-Tying, Meteorology, Navigation (Sea), Seamanship, and Shiphandling. Reaction bonus: other sailors. 5 points/level.

SEAL WEAPONS

Since I was rear security, I chose a Stoner 63A light machine gun as my main weapon . . . For backup weapons I carried the standard MK 2 Ka-Bar knife with an MK 13 day-and-night flare taped to the knife's sheath, and a Model 15, .38-caliber revolver.

- Darryl Young (SEAL Team One), The Element of Surprise

The SEALs used or tested more than 200 weapon systems during the Vietnam era. The following section lists the most important ones.

Revolvers

Revolvers were strictly used for backup; as such, they were widely carried but seldom used in combat. Revolvers have the advantage that they drain quickly after immersion in water. In addition to the issued full-size S&W Model 15, smaller backup revolvers such as the Colt Detective Special and the S&W Model 36 Chief's Special were available from 1963 on (though rarely carried).

Also see *Revolvers* in *GURPS High-Tech*.

S&W Model 15 Combat Masterpiece, .38 Special (USA, 1949-1999)

This is a variant of the double-action S&W Model 10 Military & Police, with a heavier barrel. It was issued as a standard sidearm to the SEALs in 1962 and continued in service throughout the conflict, although starting the late 1960s, semiautomatic pistols were often preferred by those who could get them.

Semiautomatic Pistols

The .45-caliber Colt M1911A1 was used by some SEALs, either by preference or because too few issue side arms were available. From 1967 on, the CIA provided the FN-Browning HP pistol to the Provincial Recon Unit (PRU) teams (pp. 57-58) and their SEAL advisors (pp. 55-56). Captured 7.62×25mm TT-33 Tokarev pistols (of Russian or Chinese manufacture) were carried as well. The Chinese-made Tokarev was named *Sung Luc Du Loai K-54* by the North Vietnamese (see *Viet Cong Weapons*, p. 46).

Also see Semiautomatic Pistols in GURPS High-Tech.

High Standard HDMS, .22 LR (USA, 1944-1945)

Developed from the military-issue single-action model HD target pistol, the HDMS has an integral sound suppressor. Originally used by OSS forces during WWII, it was supplied by the CIA to PRU advisors starting in late 1967. Some SEALs carried it prior to the adoption of the MK 22 MOD 0 "Hush Puppy," or even after that, as the newer weapon was scarce. Treat a shot as "jet takeoff" (p. B358), with -2 Hearing.

S&W Model 39, 9×19mm Parabellum (USA, 1954-1982)

This is a double-action semiautomatic pistol with an eight-round magazine, based in part on the Walther P38. The Model 39 was the standard SEAL sidearm from 1966 on. There were never enough for everybody, so it was primarily used by officers (MST officers also received it). It was often carried in a shoulder holster. (This pistol can often be seen in the hands of Colonel "Hannibal" Smith of the *A-Team*.)

Razors

Every SEAL carried a combat knife. The most common was the issue MK 2 made by Ka-Bar; other blades available through the military supply system were less common. Individuals also carried personally-owned high-quality commercial knives, including the Randall Model 14 (large knife with very fine blade) or the Gerber Mk II (dagger with fine blade).

Combat Knife (TL7). The Ka-Bar MK 2 has been the standard U.S. Navy combat knife since 1942. Treat as large knife (p. B272) with 7" fine blade, doing sw-1 cut/thr+1 imp damage. It includes a 0.3-lb. plastic sheath. \$75, 0.9 lb.

Survival Knife (TL7). Standard USAF jet pilot's hunting knife since 1962, preferred by many SEALs since it is smaller and handier than the MK 2. Treat as small knife (p. B272) with 5" good blade, doing sw-3 cut/thr-1 imp damage. It includes a 0.4-lb. leather sheath holding a small whetstone. \$30, 0.9 lb.

Nonmagnetic Scuba Swimmer's Knife (TL7). Special U.S. Navy combat swimmer knife adopted in 1962, with a nonmagnetic, nonferrous chromium-tungsten alloy blade. It is corrosion-resistant and will not set off magnetic sea mines and similar devices. Treat as large knife (p. B272) with 7.3" good blade, doing sw-2 cut/thr imp damage. It includes a 0.4-lb. plastic sheath. Not much used by SEALs due to the high cost. \$500, 1.1 lb.

Knife Bayonet (TL7). The M7 is the standard U.S. military bayonet and can be fixed on the M16-series and the Model 7188 MK 1 shotgun. Treat as large knife (p. B272) with 6.75" fine blade, doing sw-1 cut/thr+1 imp damage, or as short spear (p. B273) if attached, doing thr+3 imp damage if properly gripped two-handed. It includes a 0.3 lb. plastic sheath. Not much used by SEALs. \$40, 0.9 lb.

Pocket Knife (TL7). The MC-1 pocket knife was originally adopted by the USAF for parachutists in 1957. Made by Camillus, it has an automatic opening 3" main blade and manual shroud line cutter/hook blade. Treat as small dagger (p. B273) with good blade, doing thr-2 imp damage. \$5, 0.1 lb.

Machete (TL7). The M1942 has been the standard U.S. military jungle machete since WWII. With an 18" good blade, it uses the Knife skill, and does sw-1 cut damage (no thr damage). It includes a 0.3-lb. plastic sheath. Mainly used by point men. \$20, 1.5 lbs.

Survival Tool (TL7). The Type IV survival tool is a military version of the Woodsman's Pal commercial tool available since 1941. It is a combination axe/machete issued in some aircraft survival kits (p. 39). Treat as a small axe (p. B271) with a fine blade, doing sw+2 cut damage. It comes with a 0.5 lb. plastic sheath which holds a small whetstone and a burning glass in external pockets. \$100, 2 lbs.

The Rescue of Bat-21

Of course I'd do it again!

- Thomas Norris (SEAL Team One), interview for CBS (1972)

On April 2, 1972, a Douglas EB-66B Destroyer aircraft of the USAF, call sign "Bat-21," was shot down over enemy territory near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The only crewmember to successfully eject was Lieutenant Colonel Hambleton ("Bat-21 Bravo"). This initiated the most difficult and most famous combat search & rescue operation of the Vietnam War.

Within minutes, a pair of U.S. Army Bell UH-1H helicopters, covered by two Bell AH-1G Cobra gunships, reached the area. One AH-1G and one UH-1H were immediately shot down by antiaircraft guns (only the crew of the AH-1G were saved), and the others were driven away. On April 4, a North American OV-10A Bronco aircraft (p. 38) sent to get a fix on Hambleton's position was shot down. Two days later, after making contact with Hambleton via his survival radio (p. 22), the USAF sent two Sikorsky HH-53C Super Jolly Green Giant rescue helicopters and four Douglas A-1E Skyraider attack aircraft, but one helicopter was shot down with the entire crew lost. The next day another OV-10A went down.

After the loss of five aircraft, with 11 crewmembers dead and two captured, it was decided that rescue from the air was too dangerous, and a ground team was sent in to rescue Hambleton and the surviving pilot of one of the OV-10A's, First Lieutenant Clark. It consisted of four South Vietnamese LDNN seamen and their MACV-SOG advisor, U.S. Navy SEAL Lieutenant Thomas Norris (p. 8). On the night of April 10, Norris led the team into enemy territory to rescue Clark. Just as Clark reached the rendezvous point, so did an enemy patrol and no contact could be made. The team spent the rest of the night avoiding enemy patrols and looking for Clark. Just before dawn, they found him stranded on a sand bar of the Mu Gang River, and brought him back.

Hambleton's rescue was more problematic. After 10 days with little food and water, Hambleton was too weak and exhausted to assist his own extraction. After two unsuccessful sorties on territory heavily infested with enemy troops, all but one of the South Vietnamese refused to try again. On April 12, Norris and his interpreter Petty Officer Nguyen Van Kiet set out in a sampan boat dressed as fishermen. They were able to locate Hambleton and bring him onto the sampan. Then they quietly paddled back down the river, evading a number of enemy patrols. When they came under heavy machine gun fire, Norris called in an air strike and they were able to reach safety under the cover of a heavy smoke screen. Norris received the Medal of Honor, Nguyen the Navy Cross (the only Vietnamese to receive one).

Note that the film *Bat-21* misrepresents the whole story, in particular deleting the involvement of the SEAL and his men.

INTERDICTION

SEALs usually tried to remove or destroy discovered arms caches. Sometimes, however, they planted "spiked" ordnance which exploded on use. Supplied by program POOR BOY, the modified ammo was of original Chinese manufacture and acquired via clandestine sources. It was intended to disrupt the opponents' trust in their weapons and to sow discontent between the Vietnamese and their Chinese suppliers. The spiked 7.62×39mm assault rifle ammo looked like a normal cartridge, but once an attempt was made to fire it, it exploded in the rifle for 1d [1d] cr ex damage to the shooter. Similarly, an 82mm mortar bomb would explode in the weapon for 6d×2 [4d] cr ex damage to anyone nearby.

SEALs often booby trapped the areas they had reconnoitered, for example riverbanks and trails, using mines or hand grenades (also see *GURPS High-Tech*).

On some operations, LLDNs (and, supposedly, SEALs) would insert into North Vietnam and plant false evidence (forged letters or other documents) to implicate their targets as spies for the South, bringing them to the attention of the North Vietnamese secret police.



Advisors

The Agency people were interested in results. They didn't know what I was doing or where I was, only that I was accomplishing the mission.

- Frank Thornton (SEAL Team Two), Hunters & Shooters

One of the *raison d'êtres* for founding the SEALs was their mission to train and advise foreign troops in amphibious warfare. The very first SEALs in Vietnam were advisors training the South Vietnamese *Biet Hai* ("sea commandos"), and later their South Vietnamese counterparts, the LDNN (p. 57).

In addition, SEALs also trained PRUs (p. 57). Each province had its own PRU, and each required only one or two U.S. advisors. For example, in 1969, there were only 104 military advisors assigned to the PRUs, plus about two dozen civilian agents from the CIA – 25 of these advisors were SEALs. The SEALs were assigned to 12 provinces, all of them in the Mekong Delta and Rung Sat Special Zone. The PRU "platoons" varied widely in size, from 20 to 200 men.

The work of a PRU advisor was different. For the duration of his contract with the CIA, the advisor was a civilian agent outside the U.S. military system. He wore civilian clothes or unmarked field uniforms and was officially outside the supply system. However, despite lacking military rank, through the CIA he had access to many normal military assets (including air support), as well as other assets specifically furnished by the CIA.

compact primer on many historical aspects, including the talk and appearance of the men (complete with jeans, tigerstripes, Colt XM177E2s, and Stoner MK 23 MOD 0s), and even the sounds of the weapons.

Platoon (Oliver Stone, 1986). Following the life of a young U.S. Army infantry recruit in late 1967, this controversial film accurately portrays both jungle and Claymore ambush situations.

Tears of the Sun (Antoine Fuqua, USA, 2003). Although dealing with modern-day SEALs on a rescue operation in Nigeria, this is still useful as inspiration, as it gives insights into the composition of a squad. Also, while weapons and equipment are modern, they are nevertheless similar enough to the vintage stuff – including the Colt M4A1 carbine (developed from the XM177E2), the Saco MK 43 MOD 0 machine gun (a cut-down M60), and the Talley M72A3 light antitank weapon.

Internet

navysealmuseum.com should be worth a visit and also sells Vietnam videos and other material.

www.blackpony.org concentrates on the Black Ponies. www.geocities.com/roy-adair@sbcglobal.net is about the PACV hovercraft.

www.gruntonline.com provides "Vietnam resources for the historian and wargamer."

www.mst2-vietnam is a site dedicated to the MST-2 support crews and their boats and equipment.

www.pbr-fva.org is the official PBR veterans' website. Lots of info on the boat and its crews.

www.seawolf.org concentrates on the Seawolves.

www.warboats.org is a very detailed site covering all boats and their crews of the Vietnam War (and more).

Games

Chadwick, Frank. *Twilight: 2000*, Second Edition (GDW, 1990). Even though set during WWIII in the year 2000, this is a good introduction to military gaming. The supplements *Infantry Weapons of the World* and *Heavy Weapons Handbook* by Loren Wiseman are useful for their illustrations.

Detwiller, Dennis, Glancy, Adam, and Tynes, John. *Delta Green* (Pagan, 1993). A supplement for the horror game *Call of Cthulhu* examining a secret agency within the U.S. intelligence community called Delta Green that fights against the Mythos. It features a fictional timeline outlining the involvement of both Delta Green and various U.S. military forces with Mythos creatures, including the Vietnam era.

Dockery, Kevin, Sadler, Robert, and Tucholka, Richard. *The Morrow Project,* Third Edition (Timeline, 1980). While this action-packed post-apocalypse game has no direct connection to either the Vietnam War or the SEALs, it has many pictures and details on era-equipment, especially small arms – including the Stoner machine gun. It also provides an interesting setting for SEAL veterans . . .

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