



Teacher's Guide

Origins of Modern Special Forces **World At War**

Grade Levels:

7 - 12

Subject Areas:

World History

American History

Synopsis:

Explains that the British Special Forces, the SAS and SBS, originated in the Second World War; the Special Army Services in the fight against Rommel in North Africa, and the Special Boat Service in counterinsurgency measures in the Malaya Peninsula. As a result, the tradition was established to train Special Forces to operate in small teams, each team member to be an expert paratrooper and at least one person to be an explosives expert. Historical film footage of the rescue of hostages at the Iranian Embassy in London shows how powerful an entity the Special Forces had become. The history of Soviet Special Forces, the Spetsnaz, is covered with footage of their clandestine operations in Prague during the Czechoslovakian Revolution, and in Riga during the revolt of the Baltic States. A final section covers the establishment and training of U.S. Special Forces and their involvement in the hostage situation at the Munich Olympics, the formation of Charlie's Angels, and Special Forces anti-terrorist training.

Learning Objectives: Students will:

- Understand the role of Special Forces in times of war or terrorist activity.
- Explain how Special Forces are also involved in counterinsurgency operations.
- Provide several examples of the use of Special Forces in times of crisis.
- Appreciate the role of these skilled individuals.

Vocabulary:

sabotage, tree jumping, counterinsurgency, clandestine, abseil, pincher move, Soviet Spetsnaz, partisan, neutralize, pre-empted, HALO (high altitude, low opening), diversionary

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Pre-Viewing Discussion:

Who are the Special Forces?

What does their training involve?

How are personnel chosen to become part of a nation's Special Forces?

When did the Special Forces come into being?

Is the United States the only country with Special Forces?

Post-Viewing Discussion:

What was the role of the SAS in the Malay Peninsula? How did it accomplish its tasks?

How was the SAS able to rescue all 21 hostages in the Iranian Embassy incident in London?

How were U.S. Special Forces deployed in the hostage crisis at the Munich Olympics?

Why are Special Forces necessary today?

Further Activities:

Further research the training of U.S. Special Forces.

Investigate how U.S. Special Forces are being employed in the war against Islamic fundamentalists.

Investigate the most recent incident that involved the deployment of Special Forces.

Interview a member of the U.S. Special Forces or find a previously published interview of a member of this elite force.