

The Start of Modern Marine Corps Scout Sniper Instructor School

By Dick Culver

I have been in on the Marine Corps Scout Sniper evolution since about 1966 when I was the S-3 of the 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion at Camp Lejeune. I was told that the “new concept” was to establish a Sniper Platoon for each regiment (set up so each Infantry Battalion would receive a squad). This was to be supplemented with a platoon for the various Reconnaissance Battalions. Being the junior Battalion S-3 in the 2nd Marine Division, I was called to a conference at Division Headquarters where the entire plan was to be laid out. Dear Allah! I never heard such bitching and moaning in my entire existence! Bird Colonels (Regimental Commanders) were cursing HQMC for visiting such nonsense on a “real” combat outfit. Holy Catfish



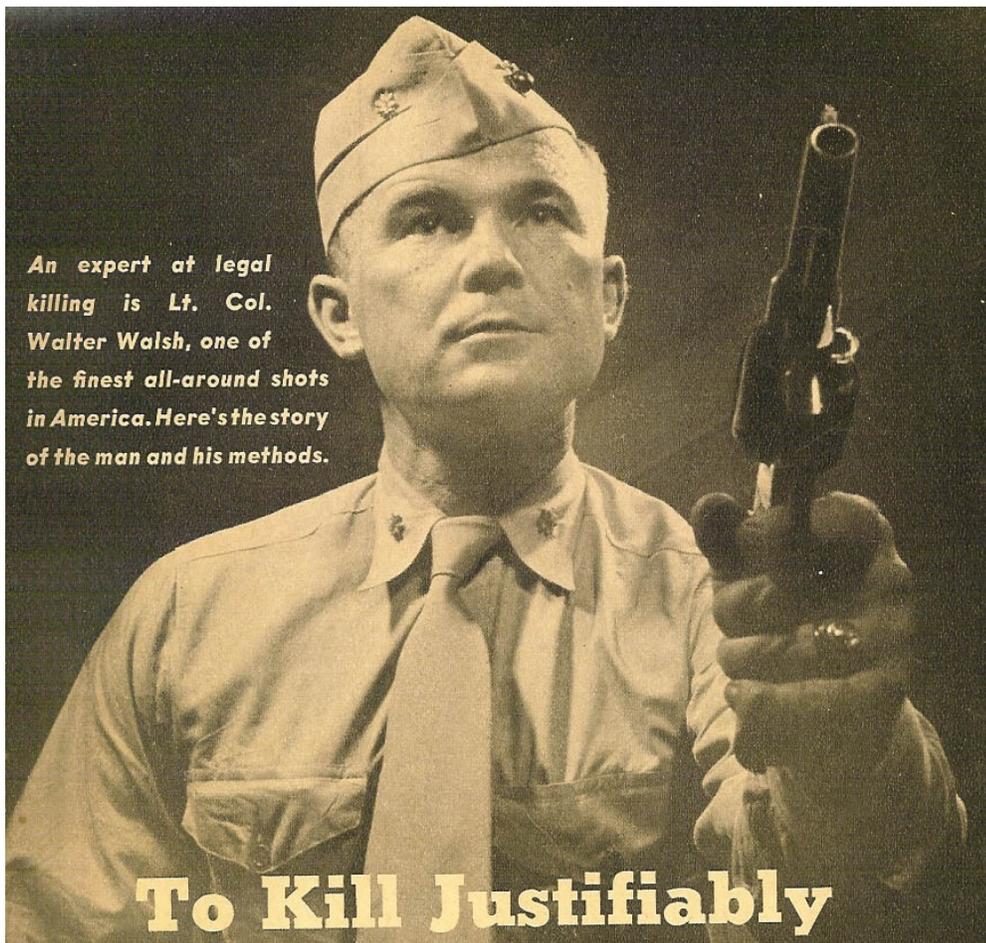
**The Setting Sun on a Marine Corps Legend,
Gunnery Sergeant Carlos Hathcock**

Batman, in short phrase I was appalled! Being a young Captain at the time (the 2nd Division was almost a “casual” outfit at that time, attempting to supply a steady replacement pool for Vietnam, and both the Med and Carib cruises. Needless to say it was a madhouse. When the upper echelons of the Regiments continued their diatribes wondering who had come up with such a hair-brained scheme, I pointed out that it probably came down from Training at HQMC (Colonel Walter Walsh had the Marksmanship Desk at the time). They were bitching that Walsh had never been an Infantry Regimental Commander, and essentially derided any suggestion that he was experienced enough to saddle them with such a fool idea.

I went on to point out that Walsh was probably one of the most (personally) deadly Marines I had ever served with, and in the 1930s as a young FBI agent, those in the know pointed out that Walsh had personally killed at least 11 bandits in individual combat (one-on-one gunfights), ...some said the total was actually closer to 17! Walsh was a Reserve Marine Lieutenant and immediately resigned (or at least took a leave of absence) from the FBI and put in for active duty with the Corps. J. Edgar Hoover was outraged, and never again allowed any FBI agents to be members of any armed forces reserve organizations (true story). Walter Walsh went on to run the Marine Corps Scout Sniper School at Camp Lejeune by 1943 and held the post until he made the Okinawa invasion where eyewitnesses watched the Colonel shoot a Jap between the eyes with a .45 Automatic through a bunker aperture at 75-yards. My point is that Walsh was probably uniquely suited for the job as his training had been both in deadly marksmanship and operating as a loner (it was a different FBI in the old days). Following his WWII Service, Walter came back to the FBI only to find he had become

something of a pariah, and decided to return to the Marines, never to return to the FBI. Following his return to the Corps, Walsh became the guiding light of the Corps Marksmanship efforts until his retirement in the early 1970s. He was truly a legend in his own time.

I was not well received at the "Sniper Conference" at Lejeune, and essentially told to leave combat planning to the regimental commanders who KNEW what they were doing. Hummm...



An expert at legal killing is Lt. Col. Walter Walsh, one of the finest all-around shots in America. Here's the story of the man and his methods.

To Kill Justifiably

Lt. Col. Walter Walsh, who served as the OIC of the USMC Sniper School as a Captain when it was located at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina during WWII. The picture is taken from a magazine article by Lucian Cary in a book called "Lucian Cary on Guns" published in the early 1950s, chronicling Walsh's exploits as an FBI Agent prior to WWII. Walsh signed Captain Cuddy's Dad's Sniper Graduation Certificate in WWII.

I wound up on Oki in 1966, assigned (on paper) to the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines. Because I had just come from Recon (I was an old Force Recon Marine from 1st Force back in 59-61), and had been the CO of A Company, 2nd Recon Battalion prior to getting drafted as the S-3 (1965-66) due to personnel shortages. This doomed my immediate plans to head to Vietnam (I had been putting in to go down as an observer since 1962). Instead I was "exchanged out" of 1/4 to run the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade Raid School on the Rock. Not a bad job, but not what I had gone to WesPac for... How does this fit into the sniper picture? Well,

when 1/4 arrived on the Island, they brought with them one of the first newly formed Scout Sniper Platoons. The sniper armorer was one of my old NCOs (with whom I would again serve numerous times), Sergeant Ted Hollabaugh (much later to run the ordnance shop with Gunner Neil Goddard at MTU Quantico building the M40A1s, and who went on to become the sniper armorer for the FBI and eventually the FBI's ballisticsian). Ted and I took time to reminisce old times. I asked him what they had given him to take "south" as a sniper rifle? Ted's reply was something of a surprise; they simply had been issued M14s! All the available

Model 70s (from both the Rifle Team Equipment stores, and any usable rifles from the Special Services issued for hunting purposes by Marines at the various bases – it was a different Corps in those days with a different mentality).

The Model 70s with both 8X Unertl and 12X Lyman Super TargetSpots had been sent to Vietnam in the early stages of the war, leaving the Stateside cupboards clean awaiting the (eventual) arrival of the highly vaunted M40 Remingtons. Ted was at his wit's end, but being an inventive sort, he had scrounged up a set of blueprints of the Rock Island Arsenal scope mount for the M14 Rifle. Ted went to FSR (Force Service Regiment) on Okie and asked if they could turn out some of the RIA mounts given the upcoming urgency of their assigned mission. They obliged (Ted was a hell of a scrounger), and he was busy installing the mounts on their M14s. Ted then went forth to pillage the entire PX complex on Okinawa to buy up every piece of quasi-suitable Jap glass you can imagine, producing what must have been some of the most cobbled together sniper guns on the planet (this was prior to the Army fielding the XM21, and later the M21, M14 Sniper guns). When 1/4 went south, the 14s fitted with Jap glass were their basic sniper armament (the M40s didn't start showing up in any quantity until about mid summer of 1967).

Compliments of the Hill Fights (881 and 861 north and south) at Khe Sanh in the Spring of 67, I finally broke loose from the Raid School, and became a Rifle Company Commander with the 2nd Battalion of the 3rd Marine Regiment, and finishing up my tour with 2/3 in 1968. Again, let me put this in perspective. Because of a shooting background, I tended to keep track of what was going on in the newly deployed Scout Sniper Platoons. It was enough to make a grown man cry. There were two major problems. The first was one of a residual stain attached to anyone one who shot rifles at small targets. Such individuals were called "dingers" and not highly regarded by the infantry elite, although most of the shooters were twice the soldiers of their detractors (I could go on about this for ages, but that's not what this is all about). The second problem was that the commanders had absolutely NO idea of what to do with a sniper, how to deploy them or what such men could do for an operating unit! Several units I visited had the Snipers filling sandbags because the hierarchy didn't know how or where they were supposed to be deployed. This is of course a blanket indictment, and there were notable exceptions such as Jim Land and Carlos' efforts out of the 1st Marine Division area, but as I said, these were the exception, not the rule. A number of our old time shooters acquitted themselves with great distinction (Carlos of course with 93 confirmed zips KIA, and Eric England with 98). Some new blood came on the scene with individuals like Chuck Mawhinney with 103 confirmed and a number of others with less, but none the less had an important impact on the morale of the enemy. The Scout Sniper effort in RVN had an important, but not terribly well publicized roll in the overall war effort prior to the publication of Henderson's book on Carlos.

Lest this become a Culver diatribe, let me fast forward with a few connecting strings. I came home from RVN to become the XO of the Range at Camp Lejeune where we (Ted Hollabaugh and several more of the armorers) experimented with silenced sniper rifles, and other interesting variations. I became the S-3 of 3rd Battalion of 1st ITR, and then was sent to the U.S. Naval Post Graduate School to become an ordnance engineer (I think it may have had to do with my ravings on the shortcomings of the XM16A1 rifle which cost me a bit of extra time in grade, ahem!). A letter written by my Executive Officer, Mike Chervenak, when I was the Commanding Officer of Hotel Company of the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, wound up on the front page of the Washington Post. Wally Green, then Commandant of the Corps was not exactly ecstatic!

I went back to the FMF from the NPG School, to become the S-3 of 1/4 and a short stint in Cambodia. Wound up at Hanscom AFB as a payback tour for my postgraduate schooling. I was mercifully rescued by Jim Land who got my fanny assigned as Dave Willis' relief at MTU Quantico. My assignment was something of a mystery to many of the old timers as I had never been a professional shooter, but rather a Marine who knew how to shoot (this will come into focus shortly). While the Distinguished Badge was a worthy accomplishment, there were some that viewed it as the begin-all, and end-all often resulting in the end of a career. As I once pointed out to one of my assigned roommates during a session at the Division Matches, that I had never looked through the sights of a rifle or pistol that I hadn't seen some "Dink's" head sitting on my front sight blade. My roommate made some smart-@\$\$ed remark about my being "one sick puppy" but it was simply the way I looked at things. As I said before, I had shot between assignments, but with the exception of my assignment to MTU it had been sporadic. As a youngster I had placed in the Wimbledon Cup with an M1 Rifle and got beaten out of the *Farr Trophy* (the service rifle subset of the Wimbledon) by two points by T/Sgt. Jim Hill, an Olympic Silver Medal Winner.

To me shooting, (be it requalification, recreational, or competition), was simply practice for greasing the enemy. Once I had gotten skilled enough to reliably hit a standing man at 1000-yards with a well-tuned service rifle with iron sights, make reliable head shots at 600-yards and put 'em anywhere I damned well pleased at 200 & 300 I was satisfied. With the pistol, I practiced until it was no problem to hit a standing man at 100-yards with an issue .45 Automatic, get head shots at 50, and again, put 'em anywhere I pleased at 25 and closer. While I didn't lose interest after that, I simply didn't give a rat's fanny about Olympic or International Competition except to prove to the rest of the world that we were not the sort of outfit to screw with.

We needed the National Competition to keep us sharp, and hone our "man killing skills" against the other armed forces. Success in such National Competition helped to make sure that we got the necessary appropriations to carry on our work of passing the latest advanced shooting techniques on to the rest of the Marine Corps. That (not pure competition), was the holy grail of MTU – this didn't make me the poster boy of an outfit that often thought of themselves as some sort of sportsmen. I have always thought that perhaps that was the rationale for Jim land putting me in MTU... Plus, he wanted to restart the Marine Corps Sniper effort, and I was more than willing!

Fast forward once more to January 1977... Lieutenant Colonel Charlie Reynolds was the CO of Weapons Training Battalion. Charlie and I had shot together as Lieutenants some years previously. He was a joy to work with, and even being an aviator, he was a true warrior. Charlie had been an enlisted lineman early in his career, and the story goes that the First Sergeant used to make the lads don their climbers and climb a practice telephone pole to retrieve their Liberty Cards from a box at the top. Charlie had gotten a commission, and decided to become an aviator. His proclivity with both rifle and pistol had gotten him assigned to the Wing Team numerous times and he eventually became Distinguished with both the rifle and the pistol. He put in two combat tours in RVN, one as a close air support A-4 driver, and a second as an early HU1E gunship pilot. Not being a silk scarf and moustache wax man, Charlie took his Huey to a suitable spot, set it on a couple of logs and with the help of his crew chief and two sizeable wrenches, tweaked each of his four forward firing M60s to converge at the range Charlie considered to be the perfect killing range for marauding communists. Charlie was a highly decorated warrior, and a damned good one. We made a

good pair for the sniper evolution that was shortly to emerge from the Training Conference at Headquarters Marine Corps in January 1977.

Charlie and I arrived at the Navy Annex, and met with Jim Land who had the Marksmanship Desk at HQMC, and the new head of the Training Branch, an Air-Arm exchange officer, Brigadier General Kuci. Now General Kuci may have been a “zoomie,” but he was intelligent, and receptive to new ideas. We went through the usual machinations about the upcoming marksmanship training for the Marine Corps for 1977 including such things as the Instructional Teams to be sent out to educate the new shooters assigned to fire in the Division Matches. Obviously having been prepped by Jim, the General asked if we had considered the formation of a sniper school at WTB? Jim was all ears of course and had his lined pad prepared for all sorts of suggestions.

I have a most annoying habit of speaking my mind and often coming up with schemes off the top of my head. Mercifully I have usually (always?) been able to pull off my ideas against all odds, and here I didn't see any problem. I mentioned to General Kuci that we intended to start the new school this very year by using the medal winners from each Division Match as students in the school. Looks of horror came across several faces, and Charlie Reynolds looked at me like I had taken leave of my senses. The General was quick however, and allowed as how the Division Commanders wanted to personally assign personnel to any possible sniper school that would return their selectees to them and not have some of their more particularly talented competitors lost in the “competition fog” that sometimes follows a summer of shooting with the team.

Not to be outdone, I told the General that the Division Commanders were quite right, but that the prospective sniper *should* be required to fire in the division matches to assess their marksmanship skills. I further suggested (to placate the brass), the Division Commanders could pre-select their snipers, and we'd pick 'em up for the school whether they placed in the matches or not. The students would already have a head start in honing their shooting skills, and even if they *didn't* place WE'D (the sniper school/MTU/WTB) teach them what they needed to know, since marksmanship was our forté. While Jim didn't have any objection to the suggestion, I'm reasonably sure he hadn't been ready for my “fait accompli” which sounded like a well thought out plan! Jim was shaking his head, but apparently pleased the outcome of the conference. As we were walking down the steps of the Navy Annex, Charlie looked over at me and said “Culver if you F#\$%^ this up, it's your @\$\$, but he was wearing an evil grin. Working for Charlie was always a pleasure!

On our way back to Quantico, Charlie asked me who I had in mind to run the Sniper School? I blushingly offered my services, but Charlie, with a nasty grin, said “oh no you don't Culver, you've got the Rifle Team, the Pistol Team, and the International Team and I ain't gonna' break anyone else in! I say again, “who are you going to *appoint* as the OIC of the Sniper School.” With only a moment's hesitation I told him Jack Cuddy, and of course the obvious answer for an NCOIC was Carlos Hathcock.

Charlie said, “but what makes you think Jack'll want the job?”

“Want the job?” was my reply, “I hadn't planned to give him any *choice!* He'll love it! You aviators are all the same, you don't *offer* 'em a choice, you simply tell 'em what's going to happen!”

“Culver, you’re insane,” was Charlie’s comment but he didn’t seem unhappy.

When we walked back into the headquarters of Weapons Training Battalion, as luck would have it, Jack Cuddy was the first individual we ran into.

“Jack, congratulations on your new assignment!”

“New assignment?” Jack said, “*what* new assignment?”

I told him that he was now the OIC of the newly formed Marine Corps Scout Sniper Instructor School! A big grin came across his face and I knew I had found my man. If I had started with a two foot high stack of OQRs (Officer’s Qualification Records) and pored over them for days I couldn’t have done better. The rest is, as they say, history!



The formation of the new school was chaotic as you might imagine. We had no budget, no funds allocated for such training, we had to construct our own training aids, and scrounge our match ammunition (not too hard around a marksmanship training facility). We lumped our training expenses under the Rifle Team Training and competition. People who sweat the minute’ details and worry themselves to death about “what if’s,” die with ulcers and get little done.

**Our First Scout Sniper Instructor School Certificate
Compliments of Leatherneck Magazine and Herb Richardson
A modernized copy of Jack Cuddy’s Dad’s Certificate from WWII**

Prior to the arrival of the shooters from the Division Matches, we conducted a “mini-sniper school” for the 6th Marine Regiment deploying for a Med Cruise, and used the experience to work out glitches that might eventually be repeated in our first official school efforts. A number of the April graduates later returned to the official, “full-blown” school later that Summer.

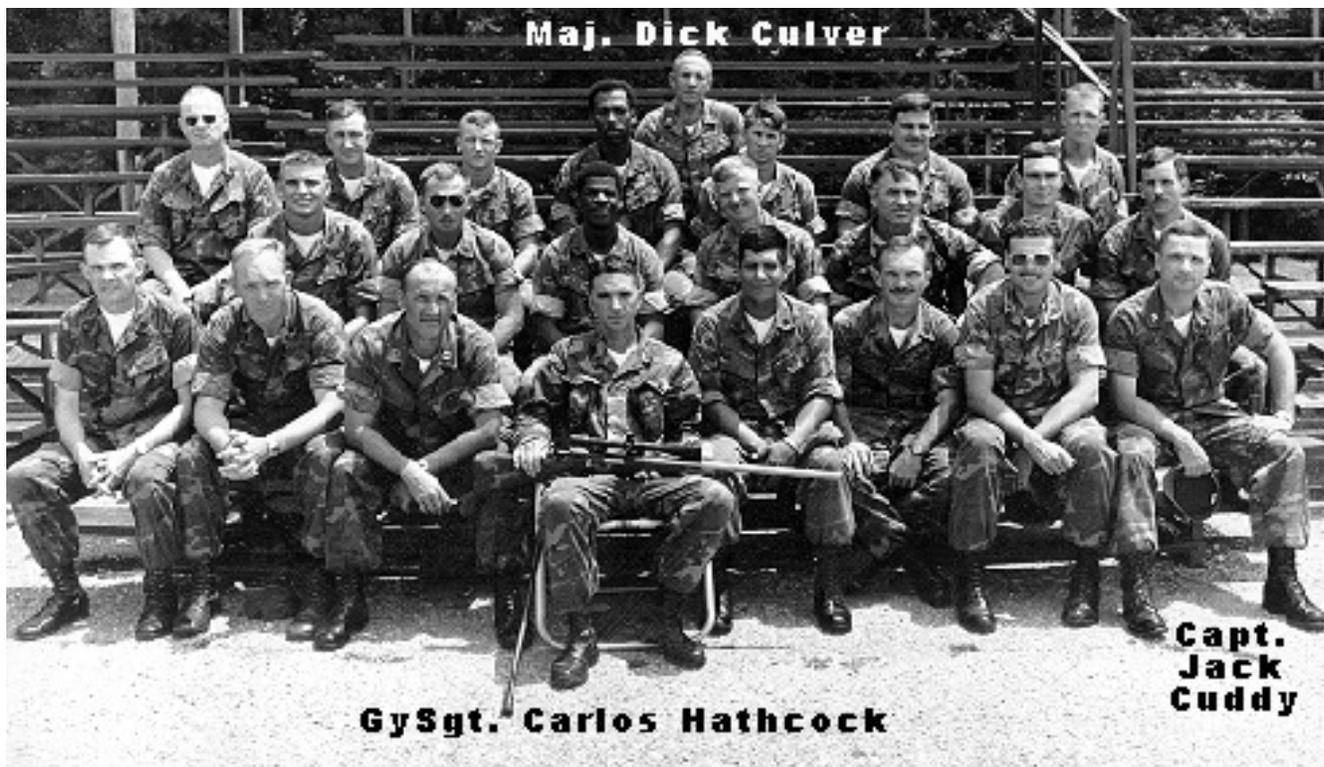
We had the students fire across the course with the summer rifle team in the morning and head for the bush or the books as appropriate following their marksmanship practice. We got additional help from Gunnery Sergeant Ron McAbee, one of our armorers but whose skills and inclinations were also attuned to the tactical execution of the use of the sniper rifle.

In the meantime I discovered that a number of pair of laser range finder binoculars were being delivered to the Development Center, and I headed for mainside. The people at the Development Center informed me that we (the Sniper School) would not be getting any of the laser range finders, as they were earmarked for the mortar teams.

“Mortar teams?” I exclaimed, “those guys can’t keep their rounds in the same grid square!”

“Ah that Sniper School is a flash in the pan, we’re giving these to the operating troops!”

My comments in reply were not for tender ears!



Our first USMC Scout Sniper Instructor Class, August 1977

Captain Jack Cuddy served as our first Scout Sniper Instructor OIC.

Jack had a long personal sniper heritage dating back to WWII along with his father (whose sniper certificate signed by Captain Walter Walsh, we shamelessly copied).

Gy/Sgt. Carlos Hathcock (whose legend speaks for itself), served as the NCOIC of the School! Major Dick Culver, the proud “Pappy” of the school, fended off the non-believers; those who were convinced our efforts would fail...

Not getting caught shuffling funds was a minor miracle! We succeeded in spite of ourselves!

I took Jack Cuddy’s Father’s WWII Scout Sniper Certificate from Camp Lejeune, signed by (then) Captain Walter Walsh, down to *Leatherneck Magazine*. Herb Richardson who worked there at the time, was a fine and helpful gentleman. I asked him if he could have the Leatherneck artists massage the old certificate into a modern version with appropriate wording replacing the Sniper’s helmet (WWII version) with a soft cover. Herb delivered a fine rendition, and I sent a copy to HQMC. By then Jim Land had retired, and my new certificate was returned with a thumbs down!

“What’s wrong with you guys?” I said over the phone, “why has my graduation certificate been turned down?”

“We don’t issue color certificates to school graduates,” was the reply, “even the graduates of the Officer’s Basic School get one in black and white!”

“Yeah, but those clowns are only Second Lieutenants!” was my come back.

They hung up on me! I headed back to *Leatherneck*. Finding Herb Richardson, I asked him what he’d charge me to produce the certificates.

“Who’s going to pay for ‘em?” he asked.

“I am,” I told him, and Herb agreed to produce my precious certificates at cost to help out the cause. I still have one on the originals (illustrated above) if no one out there can find an original example.

On the weekends we “allowed” our students to shoot their M40A1s in the long range matches to get a feel for the capabilities of their assigned weapons. As I recall, the M40A1 set at least one long range record that summer.

Firing across the course with the rifle team kept their marksmanship skills intact, and they were “allowed” to utilize their afternoons either in the classroom or running field problems in the brush. As training progressed, Carlos and Jack taught field expedient positions, and shooting moving targets, usually simulated by an individual carrying a cardboard “E-Silhouette Target” nailed to a long stick. Students assigned to the “butt detail” for the moving target exercise walked or ran at various speeds up and down the line in the butts. Crude, but effective method of simulating moving targets! What we lacked in sophisticated training aids, we made up for in enthusiasm, and inventiveness! As the old saying goes, improvise, adapt and overcome.

We essentially ran two classes end-on that summer of 1977 (although we called it a single class), the first six weeks was designed to make snipers out of our fledgling shooters since many (if not most) of our Vietnam era snipers were now back in civilian life (exceptions existed of course, Carlos, Eric England and a few others), while the second six weeks was designed to make them sniper instructors. The instructors were certified to go back to their various Divisions to start Division Scout Sniper Schools, and thus could feed their finest graduates back to our school in Quantico to make Scout Sniper *Instructors* out of ‘em. The concept worked well.

When we graduated our first class in August, I was extremely proud of the lads. They were essentially physical and mental noodles, but they were finished snipers. I would have had no mental reservations in farming our graduates to any (friendly) armed force as finished military assassins.

Following the graduation of our first class, Jack Cuddy and Carlos attended the Canadian Sniper School in Frederickton, in September, with myself and Ron McAbee to follow a bit later as observers. The Canadian School folks (both instructors and students) were awed by Jack’s and Carlos’ marksmanship skills. Carlos’ exploits in Vietnam had made him a bit of a celebrity, and his demonstrated skills simply added to his legend. The Canadian Weapons

School (encompassing everything from mortars and machine guns, to sniping skills) was headed by a Canadian Brigadier of sizeable breadth who was a bald as a billiard ball. He was known to one and all in the Canadian Army as "The Ball Pein Hammer"... Even more interesting was the fact that "The Hammer" was a former Canadian Rifle Champion. The Canuks had their feces in one bag, certainly at least in concept. The head of the small arms training was a Canadian Captain named Ken Nette who was one of the good guys.

I, in the meantime, was attempting to educate the young lieutenants attending the Basic Officer's School at Quantico. The idea was to influence our young lieutenants early in their careers, in the tactical advantages of the utilization of snipers in the operating forces. My experiences in Vietnam had taught me that most commanders were completely at a loss per the advantages of sniper employment. Many times trained snipers capable of dominating battle field situations were being used in the role of sandbag fillers. To say that this was maddening is an understatement. The obvious answer was education, but the "*anti-dinger mentality*" was deeply ingrained in the Marine Corps hierarchy's psyche at the time.

The exploits of the Marine Riflemen at Belleau Wood notwithstanding, the then current crop of uneducated Marine Officers had developed an anti-competitive marksmanship attitude which was carried over in a sort of undercurrent prevalent in the Instructional Staff at the Basic Officer's School. The feeling was that if you touched a rifle to increase your combat marksmanship skills, you essentially "*tubed*" your career chances. The Corp's marksmanship heritage boasting at least two Commandants who were Distinguished Shooters, seemed to have become lost in the mists of the modern battlefield. The USMC hierarchy still mouthed the platitudes of "every Marine a Rifleman" but when push came to shove, the "*anti-dinger mentality*" seemed to prevail if only subliminally...

Volume of fire seemed to have replaced the aimed rifle shot of the trained Marine Rifleman. A pox on full automatic switches on battle rifles. They do little past initial fire suppression, while instilling a "pray and spray" attitude that degrades intelligent employment of the Company, Platoon, Squad and Fire Team. Machine Guns are indispensable, but full automatic service rifles are not a viable substitute for aimed rifle fire, nor vice versa.



Culver (left) and Hathcock (right) observing Jack Cuddy's "Sniper Hide," well concealed by the underbrush. Canadian Instructors on the right. Jack is not to be seen, indicating his excellent "hide" construction. Wet weather is indicated by the "shiny" appearance of the slickers worn by Culver and Hathcock.

The trip to the Canadian Sniper School seemed an excellent opportunity demonstrate the advantages of the sniper to our rather reluctant Basic School Staff. With Charlie Reynold's permission, I decided to offer an open invitation to the Basic Officer's School Staff to observe our efforts at the Canadian Sniper School in Frederickton. I started on a "schmoozing campaign" designed to put our school graduates in the light of a battlefield force multiplier. A few carefully placed phone calls to the staff of the Basic School gained quite a bit of initial interest. All officers, especially senior officers, love to go on "boondoggles" to observe foreign armed forces in action. Initially several were seemingly anxious to attend, with at least one Bird Colonel who seemed exceptionally enthusiastic. I called Jack in Canada and alerted him to our possible entourage to watch the "Ball Pein Hammer" and his minions in action. Within a day, Jack got back to me to let me know the entire staff of the Canadian School was preparing to cease all instruction to welcome the United States Marine Corps! Uppss... This wasn't at all what I had in mind, but you can no doubt envision what was going through the Canadian Armed Forces mindset! Now what? It seems that the Canadians were preparing to impress their American Cousins.

I told Jack to stand by, and I would keep him posted. The following day, the ratfinks at the Basic School had "bagged-out" on the trip to Canada. I suppose the attendance by the Basic School hierarchy at something that smelled of marksmanship, was suddenly offensive to those who envisioned "anti-dingers" sitting on promotion boards, thus once again "The Anti-Dinger" mentality had reared its ugly head.

While we taught the Canuks some lessons in advanced marksmanship, their woodcraft skills were outstanding, due in at least in part, to having rifles that weren't in the same league as the M40A1 (if ya' can't hit 'em, ya' gotta' get close!).

We learned a new lexicon of terminology that was added a bit at a time to our slowly expanding Marine Corps sniping influence. We had such terms as "*Sniper Hide*" (we had just called 'em *positions*), "*Gillie Suits*" (we were using plain old camouflage with appropriate twigs – don't laugh, since Carlos "offed" at least 93 of the offending blighters using such archaic methods, good shooting positions, and "sans" the more modern terminology!). Gillie Suits had been used by Scottish Game Keepers to fend off poachers, but the name stuck and has since become one of the well recognized terms utilized in modern sniper training. Ron McAbee used the Frederickton experience to tune up his woodcraft, thus adding to his expertise in helping both Jack and Carlos in later classes. We learned as we went as the old saying goes.

A humorous side note on Culver and McAbee's return to the States occurred at the Montreal Airport. Jack and Carlos had driven to Frederickton in Jack's Jeep, while Mac and I had flown into Canada. In those days, it was common for male travelers to wear sport coats and ties, as opposed to the current garb of "tee shirts" and blue jeans. While waiting in the lobby, a nicely dressed young lady accosted Mac and I identifying herself as a Canadian Governmental employee making notes on those coming into and leaving Canada.

The young lady asked what our business was in Montreal. Mac, always having a well honed sense of humor and looking to be much the more impressive of the two of us was the first to be quizzed. What are you doing in Canada the nice looking young lady asked? Mac looked down at me (he was about 6" taller of the two of us) and said in what might well have been a Russian accent.

His answer was, “Ve can tell them ***NOTHING*** Comrad!”

Always having a quick comeback, I answered with, “***Help, I wish to defect!***”

The young lady screamed and went running off down the concourse. Mac and I went into the head and hid for almost two hours until our plane was just ready to take off. Traveling with Mac was always a thrill!

Jack later attended the British Royal Marine Sniper School in England (unfeeling oaf! I wanted to go myself, heh, heh, heh...). Here he learned much about urban sniping, much as we had been taught in Canada based on the Brits’ experiences in Northern Ireland.

We were learning, and keeping track of our new found skills. Upon his return from England, Jack told me that one of the first things he noticed was that some squared away British Royal Marine was always standing close behind him in the “Mess”, but saying nothing. Upon heading into his quarters that evening, the British Marine had apparently followed him home! After about a day or so of having his British Marine “*shadow*” follow him around, Jack asked him if there was something he (Jack) could do for him?

“On no sir,” was the reply, “I’m your ‘batman’!”

“Batman?” asked Jack, “what in the hell is a batman?”

“Sir, I’m here to make sure your uniform is pressed, your shoes are shined, and your wine glass is always filled!”

Jack laughingly told me that he wasn’t at all sure he couldn’t get used to the British way of doing things. The Brits have always had a certain sense of style!

Using our newly developed skills, we started writing the new Marine Corps Sniping Manual, always seeming to have new chapters added as things progressed.

I used my personal collection of Marine Corps Sniper Weaponry on a yellow pegboard, trimmed in red and set up in such a fashion that we could take it where ever we went to make our points, and impress our new prospective students. Heading back to the Marine Corps Basic Officer’s School, I finally got them to allow us to give the new lieutenants a rundown on the usage of snipers to control the battlefield by holding up entire units using hit and run tactics. The ability of a Marine Sniper to make the enemy “leak and squeak” (bleed and yell in pain) has a marvelous psychological effect on advancing troops. Being hit at extreme distances by unseen assailants is always distressing to the uninitiated. The “Thirteen Cent” kill is always an impressive way of making your point.

The Officer Instructors at the Basic School agreed to would give us what we asked for, but they scheduled it following *all* of the subjects in the curriculum. These kids had already finished the Basic Officer’s Course, and were to be taken into a classroom for an hour of indoctrination with the Basic School Company Commanders constantly chiding the new lieutenants that they had only a short time to return to their rooms to get dressed in their finery and get ready for having their “tassels” switched to the other side of their mortarboards.

The word had been put out that the individuals giving the indoctrination (us) were simply “team shooters” who were “pushing” competitive marksmanship. What they hadn’t figured on, was that we were combat veterans with appropriate decorations awarded for combat skills. The youngsters were much more impressed than the Basic School Company Officers had envisioned. Carlos’ skills were well documented, and I had done my time as a combat Rifle Company Commander with lots of time in the dirt. We gave ‘em what I would have considered to be an impressive lecture from combat experienced veterans.

The possibilities of, and the ability to impose our will on the enemy with a minimum amount of exposure seemed to have made its mark. The young lieutenants were almost impossible to drag out of the lecture, and their fondling of the Marine Corps Sniper arsenal was most gratifying. We (from the Sniper School) were given a lecture by the Basic School Company Officers following our indoctrination on the probability of making the youngsters late for graduation, falling on deaf ears in our case; later lectures were scheduled prior to their graduation.

Modern Sniper Classes are now the rule of the day, and even the Basic School instructional staff seemed to be properly impressed; subsequent combat experiences have made our point! Sniper utilization manifesting itself in such places as Iraq has proven the worth of Combat Marksmanship and finally made the point we had alluded to made so many years before.

Carlos was finally given a Silver Star for his exploits during his second tour in Vietnam, although recommended for the Medal of Honor! Carlos unfortunately has gone to fill his place in Odin’s Great Hall in Valhalla. Perhaps our efforts were worth while, as most modern sniper schools conducted by all the other services are essentially carbon copies of those conducted by Jack Cuddy, and Carlos those many years ago.

Semper Fi,

ROC