

# THE DELTA FORCE

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By Bill Keith

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Remember the movie *The Delta Force* starring Chuck Norris and Lee Marvin? It's the story of how the secretive army operations team rescued a number of American and others captured by terrorists in Beirut, Lebanon.

However, Col. Bernard McCabe (Ret.) -- former commander of the Force -- says the movie did not portray a clear picture of the unit once under his command. I recently spent several days with the Colonel during a visit to Israel where *The Delta Force* the movie was filmed.

After the Colonel, who is a close friend to Chuck Norris, saw the movie, he told his friend, "Chuck, thank you very much for making the movie but that's the worst thing I ever saw." Norris just grinned.

"Norris didn't do us any favors."

All who have seen the movie will recall that Norris -- during one of the most dramatic scenes -- rode a motorcycle equipped with both front and rear rocket launchers and how he used the rockets to wreak havoc on the terrorists.

McCabe confides that the Force never had such rockets. "But there have been times when congressmen, having seen the movie, asked us why we didn't use the rockets as Norris did in the movie. Every congressman wanted to see rockets on motorcycles."

He says it's unfortunate that the Navy's SEAL Team 6 was "outed" by the government after the raid in Abbottabad, Pakistan, where they killed Osama bin Laden, the mastermind of the Twin Towers bombing in New York City that killed 2, 595 people, most of them Americans. He believes it would have been better for the SEALs team to have remained a secret.

Since it is the mission of the Force and the SEALs to combat terrorism around the world, the less the enemy knows about them the better it is.

The Colonel says the Delta Force and the SEALs should remain secretive. "The enemy should not know where we are, what we will do or how long we will stay there."

"The army protects us by not even saying we exist," the Colonel said in my interview with him. "Of course, the secretary of defense knows we exist but our orders come directly from the president of the United States."

According to Col. McCabe, the Force has operations all over the world, most the public seldom ever knows the details or even that the Force was involved. "We don't want notoriety or visibility."

"We go after high visibility targets all over the world," he said. "Every day we're taking the battle to the enemy."

President Ronald Reagan deployed a Force team to Granada in 1983 to rescue Americans held captive by the Soviet-aligned government leaders. During Operation Desert Storm/Desert Shield, team members were assigned to protect Gen. Norman "Stormin' Norman" Schwarzkopf, commander of all American forces in the conflict.

The Colonel, who declined to answer certain questions for security purposes, did acknowledge that at one time there were 710 members of the elite group, most of them recruits from Special Forces (Green Berets) and Army Rangers.

Although the SEALs, because of finding and eliminating bin Laden, now have a high profile in the eyes of the general public, he says his team members train the SEALs for land operations. "But we work hard not to compete (with them)."

When asked if today if he would like to be back with the Force, he said, "I miss the people. "I was surrounded by people who would do anything for me and people I trusted." He retired from the army and the Delta Force in 1995 after 30 years of service.

The Delta Force is assigned to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, also the home of the 82nd Airborne Division.

It was a pleasure spending 10 days in Israel with the Colonel, a genuine American hero, and I have a great admiration for him.

He is a graduate of Cameron University with a bachelor of science degree and received a master's from Harvard. Today he is with Universal Safety and Security Solutions, a security company, in Houston.