

Tip
of the
Spear

For Love of Thy Country



Bob W. Cannady

Tip of the Spear
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While the contents of this book are based on actual events, names, locations, certain details, and other pertinent facts have been changed or altered to protect any and all proprietary information.



Dedication

To all the military servicemen and women from the past, the present, and future who have engaged in horrific events for their country. I dedicate this book to all of you, my brothers and sisters.

May God protect and watch out for you all in your time of need.



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Foreword

Many recognize the iconic relic that graces the cover of this book — the Spear of Destiny, the lance head used by a Roman Centurion named Longinus to pierce the side of Christ as he hung on the cross. The Crusaders were said to have carried it on a standard at the head of their army. Attila the Hun was rumored to have attained the lance as he cut his way across Europe. Stories of the power of the Holy Lance span centuries, and over the years, men of great power have been associated with it.

Successful military leaders, including Theodosius, Alaric, Charles Martel, Charlemagne, and Frederick Barbarossa were all alleged to have held the lance. According to legend, Charlemagne carried the lance through 47 battles, but died when he accidentally dropped it. Barbarossa died only a few minutes after the lance slipped out of his hands while crossing a stream. Napoleon believed the legend and attempted to gain control of the lance after the battle of Austerlitz, but it had been smuggled out of Vienna prior to the battle. He never attained it. Hitler took possession of the lance from the Hofburg Museum after declaring Austria part of the Third Reich.

The lance and its legend came to be associated with power — specifically, the power of the spear's possessor to rule the world. Oddly, none who held the spear attained the ultimate power and domination that they sought. Only Longinus, the lance's first owner, ever attained anything of ultimate value from association with the Holy Lance. Longinus, the Roman Centurion assigned to preside over Christ's crucifixion, was nearly blind. His failing eyesight might have been reason for his assignment to the duties of

executions, since he would not have been seen fit for regular military service. Upon piercing Christ's side, blood from the wound splashed into Longinus' eyes and his sight was fully restored. Longinus remarked, "Indeed, this was the Son of God!" [Mark 15:39]. He left the military and converted. He went on to become Saint Longinus.

Perhaps only a soldier can know true peace, for all he has known is war. As I mentioned previously, those that sought power in possessing the Holy Lance never achieved it. For Longinus, an instrument of war became the key to salvation. The realization and acceptance of God helps put war's horrors in perspective and allows the soldier the peace he has fought so hard for. Our faith and God's forgiveness offers us the same salvation received by Longinus. Consider the lance in any manner you wish. For me, I prefer Longinus' view.

Introduction

My dad died just prior to my birth. My mother, a single parent, struggled to raise two growing boys with no help. She was completely on her own. We grew up in Montana, and amid this natural splendor, she raised her two boys and struggled through life, marrying man after man to help keep food on the table and a roof over our heads. As these men came and went from our lives, it was always the same scenario; the vicious cycle of an abusive relationship for my mother, my brother, and I. Mom would live with each as long as she could, divorce them, and move on.

Growing up poor, I was teased and ridiculed by the other children at school. A teacher once told me that I would never amount to anything, and I spent the rest of my life attempting to discard that label. I *could* be successful. I *wanted* to succeed, to have others proud of me. I *wanted* to be special. I didn't realize that all that really mattered was my mother's opinion. In her eyes, I had always been special. Mom finally met a kind and gentle man that helped us through the hard times, but for me, life began with the Marines.

I spent five years as a Marine reconnaissance sniper and three years in the Army Special Forces. During my years in special operations, I found hidden in the walls of America things that no one should know — or should want to know. I will talk about some of these personal experiences, as well as some of my colleagues. Although some of these missions are still classified, I will change some content and names to protect both confidentiality and myself. The events of which I write are horrific in nature, yet happen every day around the world. There is no media coverage of these events, no family members are aware of them, and most of all, they are never spoken of except among the few who participate in them.

Without special ops missions and the people who are willing to give their lives in their performance, this nation would not exist. Although easy to dismiss when surrounded by the freedom, security, and convenience that is American society, not every country possesses such luxuries. In this county, we are quick to judge and make our own assessments without all the facts. As an American, you have that right. I helped secure it for you.

In conveying my story to you, I will start at the beginning — where my life ended and where it began. I will end with two different countries, two different missions, and two different mindsets. I hope to impress upon the reader the person I was when I started, and the very different person I became. I hope this will shed new light and a new understanding of what the people behind the scenes endure in their service to their country — the people who, often unnoticed, ensure you will always have the freedoms you enjoy today.

The combat soldier is the lance thrust that decides the final outcome of any military campaign. Special operations are their eyes and ears. Whether their mission is reconnaissance or site specific targets, special operations provides the leading edge of ground troop entry. I dedicate this book to my close friends lost in Desert Storm and to the untold stories of their bravery and love of country. God bless them for their dedication and devotion to duty. This book is for them, their memory, and my own self-preservation. It is for those who are, those who were, and those who will someday be...the tip of the spear.