



* *Spec Ops*

A lot of martial artists think of themselves as warriors, as latter-day samurai or Shaolin monks who possess esoteric skills that turn them into elite fighters. That can make for some harmless fantasy—as long as you don't get too carried away and start challenging people to duels with your *katana*. But if you want to find out what the real warriors are doing for their martial arts training, you need to know what goes down at Range 37 in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. But don't ask too many questions, or they might have to kill you.

Home to the U.S. Army's Special Forces, Fort Bragg is where the legendary Green Berets hang their hats—or berets, as the case may be. While being in the Special Forces is, in itself, a pretty high accomplishment in the hierarchy of warriorhood, you really enter the stratosphere when you qualify to go to SFARTAETC, or Special Forces

Advanced Reconnaissance, Target Analysis, and Exploitation Techniques Course. Around Fort Bragg, it's known as simply Range 37. It's the hub of training for all matters related to close-quarters battle. When they look for expert input from a martial arts perspective, one of the first people they call is Greg Thompson.

The head of Team Roc, one of the South's most successful mixed-martial arts gyms, and author of *H2H Combat*, Thompson has more than 30 years of experience in traditional karate, *muay Thai* and Brazilian *jiu-jitsu*.

"I'd wrestled in high school and done a lot of martial arts, but when I saw the first Ultimate Fighting Championship, I realized that jiu-jitsu was the missing link in my training," Thompson said. "There weren't many people doing it in North Carolina, but I got together with some Special Forces guys who had trained a little. I got involved in Royce Gracie's network that way, and when they went on military assignments, I kept training. I became more experienced until they asked me to start teaching them."

Thompson added a variety of skills to his tool bag, working out with everyone from UFC star Randy Couture to *kali* expert Marc Denny. He brought the best of what he learned back to Fort Bragg.

"I have a degree in industrial design, and I try to take martial arts through the design process I learned where I don't have an emotional attachment to any technique—I just try to think how I can make it work," he said. "But it's not even about how I can make it work; it's about how I can get other people to make it work."

He devised the Special Operations Combatives Program, a course composed of three main categories: foundational work (basic techniques from boxing,



