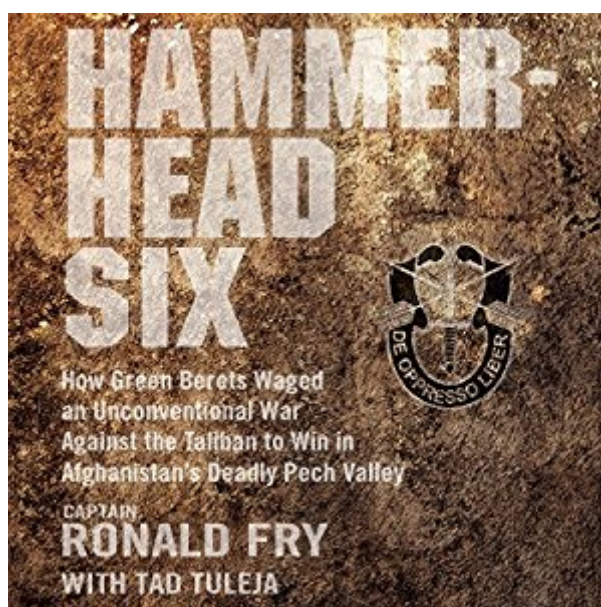


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# Hammerhead Six: How Green Berets Waged An Unconventional War Against The Taliban To Win In Afghanistan's Deadly Pech Valley



## Synopsis

Two years before the action in *Lone Survivor*, a team of Green Berets conducted a very different successful mission in Afghanistan's notorious Pech Valley. Led by Captain Ronald Fry, Hammerhead Six applied the principles of unconventional warfare to "win hearts and minds" and fight against the terrorist insurgency. In 2003, the Special Forces soldiers entered an area later called "the most dangerous place in Afghanistan". Here, where the line between civilians and armed zealots was indistinct, they illustrated the Afghan proverb "I destroy my enemy by making him my friend." Fry recounts how they were seen as welcome guests rather than invaders. Soon after their deployment ended, the Pech Valley reverted to turmoil. Their success was never replicated. Hammerhead Six finally reveals how cultural respect and hard work (and the occasional machine-gun burst) were more than a match for the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

So many popular war books are about spectacular disasters—13 Hours, *Lone Survivor*, *Black Hawk Down*. Sure, this makes for gripping reading and maybe we'll learn some lessons from them. But *Hammerhead Six* proves that a book about doing things right and achieving incredible success in the most inhospitable cultural environment imaginable can be an even better read. This book tells a story that is the fullest expression of the Green Berets' motto I have ever seen, "To liberate the oppressed." Tad Tuleja tells Ron Fry's story in a gripping, intelligent, but very readable style. The professionalism of CPT Fry's team, with their unique abilities and personalities, is engaging and inspiring. Their bravado is infectious but tempered by an essential

humility and willingness to listen and learn that is the key to their success. Fans of the genre will love it and find it refreshingly hopeful. People who don't usually read war books will find an uplifting story of compassion and heroism that anyone can admire. For policy makers and professional military readers, this book goes beyond a good read. It is an essential read. Our soldiers and host nation peoples' lives are at stake. This book needs to be on every commander's reading lists in every unit in the military, and assigned in every classroom where the topic is even remotely related to warfare—unconventional or otherwise. The bullet-point lessons learned at the end are invaluable. We ignore them at our peril. Take it from a guy who teaches college literature classes these days, I have read scores of these types of books and this one is the best. Full disclosure: I know the Hammerhead 6 guys. I was their chaplain in Afghanistan. Tad Tuleja is a long-time friend and collaborator.

I have been reading military /tech thrillers since the age of 9 when a youth book about the evacuation of Dunkirk changed my life. Reading is my most favorite thing to do, and even though the mil/tech are my go-to, my training was in the classics and best of literature. I know a good read when I see one. I loved this book. The lessons about the true value of Green Beret assets in unconventional warfare are spelled out so clearly. Fry, 13 years after the fact, must have gone back to his journals and talks with his buddies and let his mind and body occupy the Pech once again. I have read so many books whose settings are in the Kunar and Nuristan provinces, and was actually an advantage that the origin story of Camp Blessing comes after the debacles of all the failures in those remarkable river valleys and mountainsides. Like the story of American Spartan, when Green Berets are allowed to fully engage their remarkable talents and training to become members of their communities while still overseeing and furthering their own mission, remarkable social changes occur. And it's not that what these highly trained military assets accomplish is a miracle, it's just that they engage indigenous persons and groups using exactly all the psycho-social and behavioral principles that have been proven effective in a million other settings. If Big Army can shut its mouth, get out of the way and let this branch of service persons do EXACTLY WHAT BIG ARMY TRAINED THEM FOR IN THE FIRST PLACE - ah! Victory and Success in surprisingly a cost effective and low body count methodology. But I preach to the choir. There are too many Custers roaming the plains, madly in love with themselves and leading their men to slaughter to let the common sense magic and influence of De Opressor Libre do what it does best.

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