

First Special Service Force V-42 Stiletto



*Original V-42 Stiletto by Case & Sons *Source: Wikipedia*

Introduction: This is a brief history of the original V-42 stiletto knife made by W.R. Case & Sons knife company and a review of the new Boker Plus "V-42 Devil's Brigade Knife Replica" Stiletto Knife made by H. Boker & Co. which is sold by the Montana Military Museum and endorsed as an authentic V-42 replica.



*Boker Plus V-42 Replica. *Photo by Ron Jones*

The "*Force Knife*" Case V-42 has become legendary in military history and is seen as the "Holy Grail" for military knife collectors. The V-42 was the only custom-made knife for military, and there were only 3,423 produced for the First Special Service Force (FSSF) "*Black Devils*" Commando unit.

The FSSF "*Black Devils*" were a combined US-Canadian force of mountain men used to cold weather conditions. They were essentially trained for suicide missions in WWII. The Force trained in Helena, Montana near the Canadian border. The FSSF inspired subsequent commandos and elite forces. In my opinion as a PE and fitness historian, the FSSF physical fitness training and fighting methods were second to none. These guys were lethal and beyond tough. They survived "impossible" missions at a much higher rate than the Germans. The Germans nicknamed them "Black Devils" because they would sneak into the German camps at night and kill them in their own foxholes then leave their infamous stickers on the foreheads of dead soldiers warning, "The worst is yet to come!" They were also good enough to sneak in and steal their food without waking the Germans who became absolutely terrified of them hence the "Black Devils/Devil's Brigade" legend was born and well-deserved.

Ron Jones, MS • PO BOX 801512 • Valencia, CA 91380-1512

ron@ronjones.org • 661.993.7874

Historical Kinesiologist • Physical & Health Educator

First Special Service Force V-42 Stiletto



*Fairbairn-Sykes Fighting Knife *Source: Wikipedia*

V-42 Origins & Design: The FSSF Force Knife V-42 was inspired by the Fairbairn-Sykes knife used by earlier British forces and Shanghai Police "Defendu" system under W.E. Fairbairn. The Fairbairn-Sykes knife was made by the Wilkinson Sword Company. The V-42 was modified to improve close-quarter killing--it was not designed for general utility applications--only killing. The V-42 has a narrower blade which makes it easier to fit in-between the ribs and aids in promoting "cleaner cuts" in order to bleed out the enemy faster and more efficiently. The blade also was modified for a thumb imprint to aid in horizontal stabs between ribs. The pommel end was taken from round to pointed to create a "skull crusher" advantage, but the earlier pommel tips were so sharp that the men filed them down to prevent them from gouging their own clothes. The V-42 was developed and modified under the direction of FSSF leader Colonel Robert T. Fredrick who later went on to become the legendary "Last Fighting General." Fredrick himself is worth serious review as he was an incredible leader and lethal soldier who went on deadly night maneuvers behind enemy lines with his men.

Original V-42 Stiletto Specifications

Manufacturer: W.R. Case & Sons Co.

Date: Circa 1942

Weight: 7 ounces

Blade Type: Stiletto with thumb imprint

Blade Length: 7.250" or 7.125"

Blade Steel: High Carbon

Blade Color: Blued (to reduce glare)

Knife Length: 12.5"

Blade: Double Edge Hollow Ground

Handle: Finely Serrated Leather Washers

Pommel: Pointed

Sheath: 20" Leather Scabbard

Versions: There were four slightly different variations produced.

Production: 3,423 knives

Ron Jones, MS • PO BOX 801512 • Valencia, CA 91380-1512

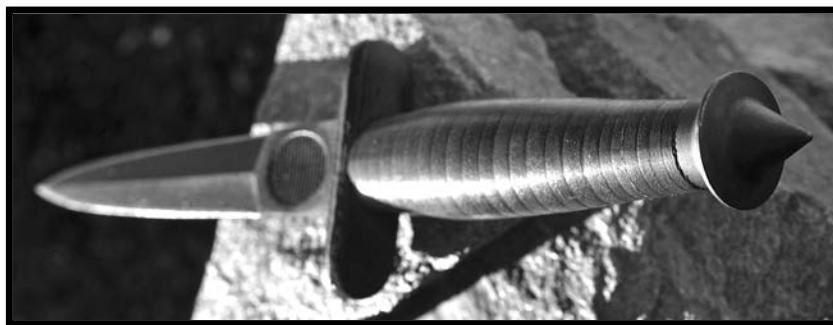
ron@ronjones.org • 661.993.7874

Historical Kinesiologist • Physical & Health Educator

First Special Service Force V-42 Stiletto



Boker Plus V-42 Review: For \$99.00 USD plus shipping and insurance, this is a solid knife and a wonderful piece of history too. The knife came soon after ordering and well quite well packaged and secured. The knife was housed in its own Boker Plus foam-lined box and also came with many other "extras" from the museum like stickers, patches, and various historical articles that are quite nice. I'm very impressed with the knife and order. The handle snap ring was a bit tight and took me about five minutes of wrestling to get it snapped, but it stretched just enough to fasten snugly without excess effort. All in all, this is a great knife for your collection. The people at the Montana Military Museum where much of the FSSF Black Devil history is stored and preserved are quite pleasant and helpful. There are many V-42 replica knives now that range from under \$100 USD to around \$500 USD, and according to military knife experts, none of them really do the original justice as this was reported to be--THE most elite military knife ever produced. I opted for this version because it was recommended by the military museum that is very picky about how the FSSF is represented and honored. I'm glad to at least have a decent replica of this legendary blade.



Ron Jones, MS • PO BOX 801512 • Valencia, CA 91380-1512

ron@ronjones.org • 661.993.7874

Historical Kinesiologist • Physical & Health Educator

First Special Service Force V-42 Stiletto



Purchase Boker Plus V-42 Replica:

https://www.montanamilitarymuseum.org/janda/products_details.php?productid=260

Excellent RV by military knife collector:

<https://www.fairbairnsykesfightingknives.com/case-v-42.html>

Military History Review Article:

<https://armyhistory.org/knife-fighting-commando-type-v-42-the-original-special-forces-knife/>

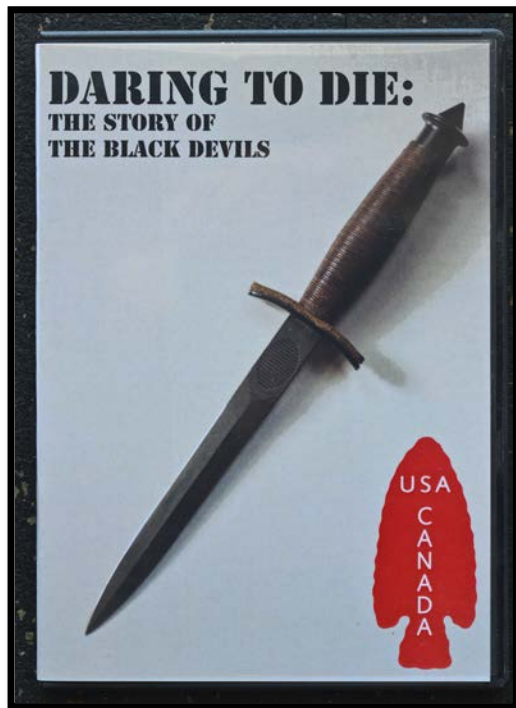
"Get Tough!" by Major W.E. Fairbairn (FREE PDF)

<http://theleanberets.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/1942-Get-Tough-W-E-Fairbairn.pdf>

Wikipedia V-42 History:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V-42_stiletto

**Review and Boker Plus V-42 photographs by Ron Jones, MS.*



Ron Jones, MS • PO BOX 801512 • Valencia, CA 91380-1512

ron@ronjones.org • 661.993.7874

Historical Kinesiology • Physical & Health Educator