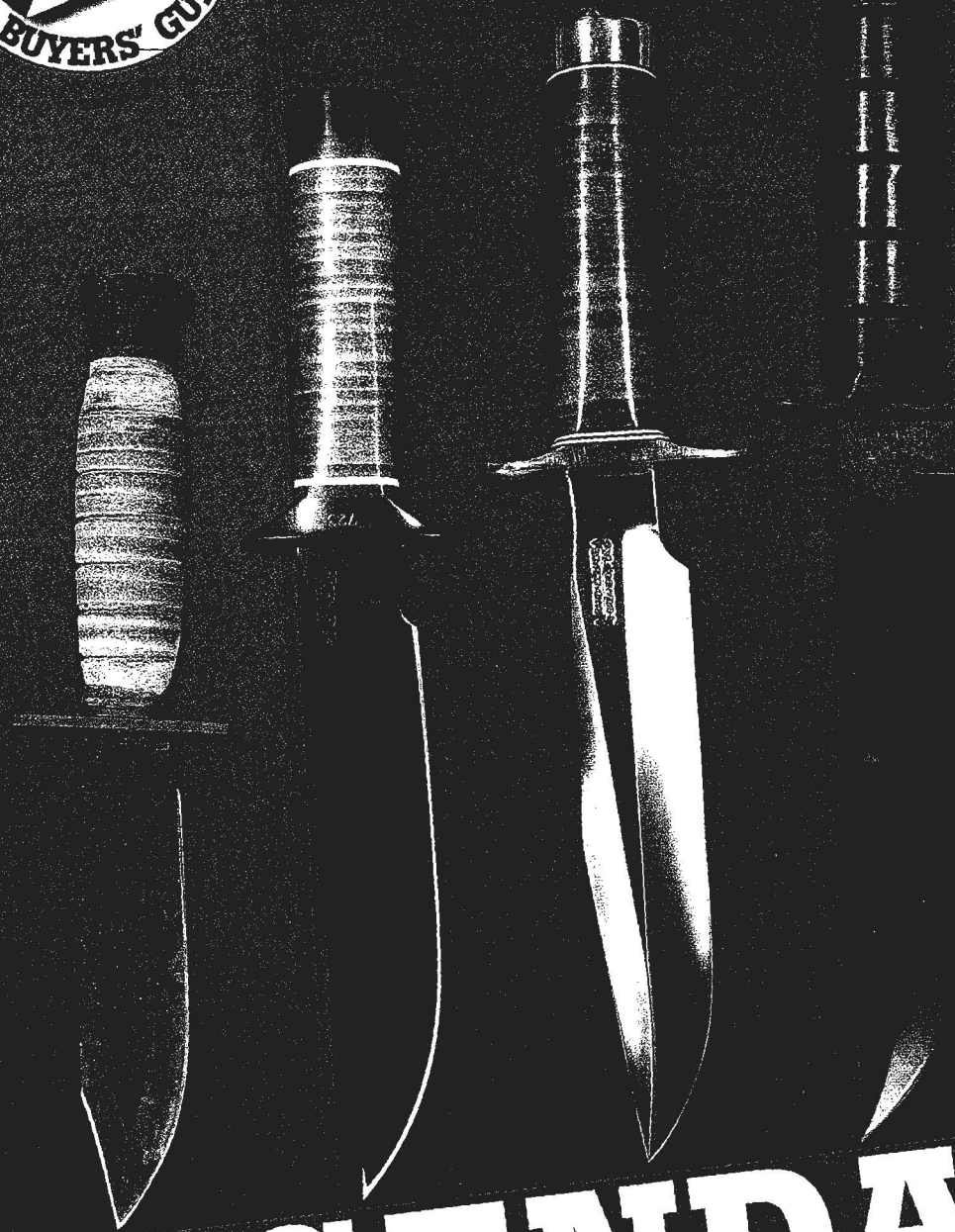




Your top five legends from left to right:
Ontario ASEK Survival Knife System, SOG
Bowie 2.0, Randall 1-7, USMC Ka-Bar,
and Gerber Mark II



LEGENDARY

THE FIVE TOP TACTICAL FIXED-BLADE KNIVES

BY ABE ELIAS

You talk about a hot topic! Any time you discuss the top five of anything, such as the best tactical fixed-blade knives, you're going to get into a heated debate. So, before we get into this, let me lay down some questions I asked myself before choosing these knives.

- Have the knives been in production for a long time? If so, was there a demand for them and have they established a reputation for satisfaction?
- If the knife has been in demand in the past, will it be in the future?
- Does the design have any legs? Think of it this way: It's like the difference being a hit song like the Stones' "Sympathy for the Devil" and Lady Gaga's "Poker Face." When all the flash is gone, what do you think your kids will be listening to in 20 years?

1. RANDALL

The top of the list is the Randall No. 1, specifically the 1-7 with the stacked-leather handle. Although Randall knives were in production long before the Vietnam War, for my generation, they seem to be one of the many knife legends that surfaced from that that time. In fact, Randall knives were in production by Bo Randall before World War II and were carried by various military personnel during that War.

The No. 2 is available in a number of sizes, from 5-inch blades to 8-inch, and comes in a number of handle configurations, including natural wood, leather and Micarta. The blade features a double-sharpened tip for the first 3 inches and comes with a fighter double guard.

There is a long waiting list for Randalls but there is also a vibrant aftermarket for them, too. Randall knives are highly collectable and have spawned knife-show phenomena, such as Randall dealers, and even the Randall Knife Society.

2. USMC KA-BAR

Another long-serving war knife is the USMC Ka-Bar. It has been a while since it was the standard issue for the U.S. Marine Corps, but it is still sold in Post Exchanges (PX), and is still one of the most popular knives among the Devil Dogs. In talking to former Marines, their experiences with the Ka-Bar were so positive, the knife serves



The top five tactical legends (bottom to top): Randall 1-7, USMC Ka-Bar, Ontario ASEK Survival Knife System, Gerber Mark II, and SOG Bowie 2.0

as their benchmark for all other knives.

The USMC Ka-Bar has seen military service since World War II and was part of a wave of knives produced in the same style by various manufacturers for War contracts. The knife's overall length is 11 7/8 inches with a 7-inch, clip-point, Bowie-style blade. Originally it came only with stacked leather washer handles but now comes in other handle materials as well as in a combo serrated straight edge blade. No collection of military-style knives is complete without at

least one Ka-Bar. They are solidly built formidable in presentation.

3. ONTARIO ASEK SURVIVAL KNIFE SYST

In the number-three spot is the Ontario ASEK Survival Knife System, commonly known as the Aircrew Survival Egress Knife. Originally a Camillus design, Ontario is producing them today to the same specifications. The ASEK has a clip-point blade with a