5 Bad-ass Perimeter Defense Lessons From A Vietnam Vet

Thank God you made it to your rural bug out location (BOL)! You almost didn’t get out in time before the Police State Metropolis you lived in had their National Guard soldiers shut down all further mass exodus from the quarantined city, with shoot to kill Iraqi War style road blocks on the last exits that weren’t already blocked by panicked mobs and burning piled up car crashes.

You get out of your bug out vehicle (BOV) and kneel down for a moment on the cool green forest ground in a soon to get very hot world, and give solemn thanks that you were granted the presence of mind and discipline to have your BOV ready to rock at a moment’s notice.

You will miss a few of the friends and neighbors you know you’ll never see again, and you’ll feel sorry for those who were trapped in their normalcy bias comfort zone and ignored the ominous but clear warnings. You will pray for them the first chance you get but right now you have another serious problem.

Beware of “Zombiez”!

You pulled ahead of the general Mad Max road rage on the Interstate and traffic finally thinned out considerably as you branched out to the county highways.

You started passing more and more stalled out of gas vehicles off the side of the road, now looted out, and deceased looking, with shot out windows and bullet holes in the doors. You noticed small groups of stragglers marching off the shoulder of the roads carrying their military grade weapons and back packs with grim desperate looks on their faces.

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These were the ones who never cared about prepping. They had a different kind of survival plan. They were out ambushing, murdering, looting, and ravaging those who didn't prepare their vehicles well for escape.

A couple of them raised their weapons to draw a bead on your vehicle as you floored it and screamed passed at over 90 miles an hour but they never had a chance for a good shot. You then had that sickening, kicked-in-the-gut feeling as you realized it was going to get really ugly, really fast.

You hoped your secluded location would minimize marauding this "zombie" contact and that you would have enough time to make last minute adjustments, and finishing touches to your dedicated compound perimeter security before you hunkered down and sweated out the inevitable anarchy looming on the distant horizon…

Reality Check!

"Okay, I'm ready to work on the perimeter!"

Although different catastrophic/emergency and disaster events require different strategies and appropriate levels of preparation, they all share a single concept.

Security. Security, defense, and personal safety measures also span different levels of preparation effort and expense.

There is a lot of info out there now on urban home invasions and spontaneous concentrated urban rioting and looting, and how to protect and fortify your house from a break in.

This is a good idea in any case even before an apocalyptic scenario, and the harder and more time consuming you make it for a predator to attack and invade your city home or apartment the better the odds they'll get caught at the door by police. Or give you time to escape at another egress or 'gun-up' in defensive counter attack mode behind some concealment/cover and take them out ambush style as they break in.

But in a doomsday scenario such as a major power grid collapse, sudden universal economic collapse, or super bad disease outbreak, there won't BE any Police response, at least not for you. Fortifying your home's doors and windows and stocking up on a few weeks' worth of extra food and water won't help you that much in the long run.

The first myth is that you can survive in place relatively easy if you read certain books. That might work through a hurricane, super blizzard, or local power outage that traps people for many days, but not in an all pervasive major social and economic, and resource breakdown that would last months and even years. This is an entirely different prep than surviving in place strategies. Do not make the mistake of not realizing the difference.

In the worst case SHTF event, you must be as isolated as you can from congested metropolitan areas if you want any chance for safety and survival. Period. Because sooner or later desperate and extremely psycho dangerous "zombies" will target your urban dwelling place and get through your home fortifications one way or another, and kill you, or burn you

out.

Almost any house can be breached and broken into by determined attackers given enough time if there’s no worry about police showing up on the scene and the occupant/defender’s name is anything other than Rambo. And I don’t mean days, but more like only a few siege hours.

Even brick houses with bars or steel break in shades like you see on business storefronts in high risk areas. And if you somehow manage to kill them before they get in the first time, there will just be another group, even scarier, right after that in most large urban environments. That’s the reality.

Bug Out and Live!

The best way to initially survive a worst case scenario is to NOT to be around anything for very long that can kill you. Then remaining low profile if not completely secluded off the predator radar and out of targeting sight. Because why would anybody of sound mind, except in certain unfortunate personal circumstances, want to stay in a burning high rise hoping the sprinkler system will work when they could take the emergency exit out immediately?

So bugging out should be your primary plan. And the only place to go is out in the rural areas where contact with others is as limited as possible along with minimal profile footprint concealment. Once you’ve attained that, then the next part is making sure the “zombies” can’t just easily take it all away from you if they do stumble upon your hideout.

If you chose a decent BOL, some professionals with experience in this think it’s easier and more advantageous to your safety and security to make a virtually impenetrable perimeter barrier around your dwelling than it would be to seriously fortify a house/apartment in the city or town.

The factual truth is that these types of bad human relations

as violent social conflicts have been going on since Biblical times and always contain certain elements. It always boils down to attackers and defenders. Fortified compounds, camps or castles, and superior firepower and tactics which change the advantage and even the whole game.

5 Lessons to Learn from Vietnam About Perimeter Defense

The art of this type of social warfare evolved to a stagnation point during the Middle Ages and then became obsolete during the evolution of the military industrial complex and modern world warfare that included airpower and massive tank warfare.

It was not revisited and perfected until the mid-20th century, in a small country police action in a faraway country called Viet Nam.

Ironically, as I draw from personal empirical knowledge and on the job experience and historic record on the comparisons and similarities, the best paradigm for survival perimeter combat preparedness comes from the Vietnam war, both when the French and the Americans were fighting it.

The lessons learned and strategies and tactics ultimately deployed became so refined and successful they remained in military application even to the modern Afghanistan war, and American mountain base camps and varies only due to advanced technology in weaponry and early anti-intrusion detection.

The Viet Nam conflict draws parallels similar to apocalyptic anarchy because political perspective notwithstanding, the typical American defenders hunkered down in camp compounds and defended against mainly ground forces who won‘t have air or naval power or sophisticated precision electronic detection or aiming technology.

The Viet Nam ground war was relatively primitive terms of force multipliers and its success, or lack of it, depended mostly upon small unit engagement with relatively basic

weaponry.

Amazingly, today this type of fortification can be replicated on a smaller civilian but equally effective outcome on the private BOL compound today, and in a couple tactical applications, even better! Obviously the scale of enhanced force would be somehow different but the essential principles of applied dynamics and what works best are the same.

Here's how to get started in the simplest, least expensive way.

1. Local Threat Evaluation

A combination of the likelihood of indigenous harmful contact and the random plain view discovery level of your BOL determine the odds of you getting approached by marauding "zombs".

If they can't see you from any road, there simply is not that much of a chance of many roaming predators getting into your area, because most of the area is inhabited by good people, more exposed than you but pretty self-reliant and well-armed, and they would pro-actively interfere with any groups of predators before they would ever get to your neck of the woods. So the likelihood of your BOL getting hit is very low.

Setting up a protective live defense perimeter barrier would virtually guarantee your long term survival of the rare one time attack if that happens, because almost any well prepared and armed prepper will have enough firepower, ammo and resources on hand to handle that. That is opposed to a long duration regular siege and total destruction type environment that would be common in anarchy ruled urban environments.

2. Barrier Protection

What does the Great Wall of China, the Berlin Wall, 13th century castle walls and other heavy barriers have in common?

Walls are the most difficult obstacles to penetrate or breach by humans without heavy destructive equipment, but they also are the most expensive.

If your intruder simply can't move forward and gain access to you in your inner protective shelter without getting stopped one way or another by formidable outside barrier, then your perimeter security succeeded and you survived. That's why it's better to have an outside perimeter circle of defense rather than allow them to get too close to your main retreat.

Again, the Vietnam War proved beyond doubt that you don't need a castle or great solid wall to get the job done. There are other, even better ways…

3. Perimeter Alarms

Aka anti-intrusion alerts and early warning devices. In Nam, we used anything and everything for perimeter alert from our empty beer and soda cans filled with pebbles, to the latest state of the art (at the time) forward terrain radar units and seismic ground sensors spread out even beyond the perimeter along with trip flares, and booby trapped grenades, and of course a healthy amount of pre-positioned Claymore mines if some of the attackers somehow get too far into the perimeter kill zone.

IF YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING you can easily replicate most of that with modern electronic battery operated noise alerts either with PIR detection triggers or pull pin type trip wire activation along with careful use of pyrotechnics, or both. There are pros and cons with each, mostly depending upon if you have a lot of animals especially deer in your area.

Pyrotechnics are a very good tried and true method of alert and can be enhanced to perform double duty as a shock deterrent ONLY IF YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING. The old saying is that there are only two types of pyromaniac powder monkeys: those who are already missing some fingers or eyeballs, and

those that are getting ready to.

The other thing is the potential forest fire hazards if you live in a dry area especially if you are using the trip flares, instead of a flash bang alert.

There’s also the legality factor. Most states have strict laws on the amount of powder you can legally shoot off in a non-commercial/professional display personal firework. I believe the max is an ounce of retort/bang powder that you can shoot off or purchase without a commercial license. But check it for yourself before trying anything else!

Plus, if the DNR is snooping around your land and you made an oversized flash bang on a trip wire that damaged his eardrums that will become cause for arrest.

I know there is advice out there on how to booby-trap your doorways but I seriously don’t recommend doing that with anything that can kill or maim (stick with loud siren alerts or flashing lights only) because not only is it illegal virtually everywhere, but it will be only a matter of time

before you yourself or someone you care about trips the booby-trap.

And I strongly recommend that you don’t get into that with common store bought fireworks, which could easily blind or burn an innocent victim or start your house on fire.

On a perimeter defense, the common larger over the counter fireworks like the bursting skyrockets and rapid fire mortar tube clusters pre-loaded shooting and bursting shells could be used just to wake up the group of invaders.

The burst charges are not black powder loaded, but contain the silver flash powder which provides a potentially dangerous hyperbaric close concussive effect even in only a cardboard tube with the legal maximum amount of powder.

Again, these are legal to own, but you can’t shoot them at people without getting into trouble. Just like guns.

But in an all-out lawless society where nothing will be adjudicated anymore in any system but God’s court after you’re dead, these are formidable perimeter counter attack devices because they also can be enhanced for maximum damage and launched on demand electronically from a secure rear position or even tripped by wire.

So it wouldn’t hurt to stock up on these because they’re legal and fun on the 4th, and would definitely come in handy on a doomsday “holiday” as well, both as an alert and force deterrent out to a hundred meters or so. Like shooting mini-RPGs and a mini grenade launcher barrage on egress/entry routes backed up by hidden wireless security cameras, which now can reach distances out to five hundred meters or better.

But if you are just getting started, stick with the pull pin or PIR battery security sound alert/alarm devices.

You’ll immediately get why I caution you on this after your nephew or YOU forgot about it while out squirrel hunting, trip it yourself creating embarrassing Hershey Squirts in your under drawers, and your children or grandchildren will laugh at you mercilessly.

You absolutely need a lot of training and experience before you start playing with things that go bang. After you think you are safely proficient with the mind set of perimeter security devices, you can graduate yourself and augment to the trip wire re-loadable retort devices like the 12 ga. shotgun shell blaster.

These are on the internet for about $40. They can take a shotgun shell right out of the box but these don't work well because it is designed to be used with a barrel.

By itself it just pop bursts not even loudly below the shot/slug, and doesn't even become any shrapnel because the powder is a slow burning type and it just splits the sides. Waste of good ammo. But you can get louder blank shells and commercial screaming flares and loud bangers from specialty ammo vendors on line. Pricey but very effective alert and deterrent effect.

There are also other good and even cheaper percussive devices that use only .22 caliber blanks, shotgun primers, or the nail gun blanks which also work decently on a lesser scale.

4. Perimeter Intrusion Obstructions

Of course a high chain link or barbed wire fence always helps slow down people you don't want coming in on your property, but these are easy to breach if you are a good climber or have a pair of wire cutters.

You can make it look like a FEMA prison camp and it will feel like one also, but it won't do much good against anything but animals maybe, unless you electrify it, and I don't mean

horse/cattle fence. I mean you'll need sizzling frying high amp prison fence to stop "zombs" using only a fence. Not to mention it will be pretty obvious to passers-by unless you camo paint it or something.

The next best thing is pyramids of concertina type barbed/razor wire rolls. Harder to breach without having heavier tarps or plywood which "zombs" certainly won't have in their back packs. Easy to set up.

Or, you can do it cheaper and less labor intensive with something that worked so well in the Nam that we almost felt sorry for the enemy who tried to get through it because it always was like the proverbial shooting of fish in a barrel. We called it snag wire and/or tangle foot and as their moniker imply, once ensnared, they were almost impossible to get untangled from.

And all it amounted to was regular barbed wire rolled out on the ground in crisscross or lattice pattern on the ground at intersects less than an average human step, and propped up with stakes at various heights from ankle to knee level.

Enhanced by anything imaginable from punji spikes to tripwire

grenades to napalm bombs along the way. Not to mention backed up by the secondary defensive firepower towers, and bunkers armed with heavy machine guns and LAW rockets and inner perimeter mortars.

Tangle foot would be comparatively easy and less expensive to set up in conjunction with the ’creative’ use of ‘passive’ natural terrain obstruction like tree limbs and boulders and heavy brush on your perimeter. You’d only need about an eight foot width across the part of the perimeter you were setting it up at.

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Look closely at the seemingly natural and innocent looking forest pictures to the untrained eyes. In the pictures of downed trees and branches which were intentionally created as an egress obstruction.

You can’t walk or climb over that without falling, tripping, and twisting yourself to injury and entrapment while not getting far, as it stretches for several yards straight ahead and several yards to the flanks before you can make it through but hidden in the grass are also stretches of tangle foot.

So you would naturally walk around it until you found a pathway/clearing to continue on. This turns out to be a funnel zone which essentially lures the intruders into going where you WANT them to be herded. Which is replete with trip alerts, more serious booby traps, cameras, or whatever else you like when the SHTF and you no longer casually walk around in the area because you’re now in full defense mode.

And these funnel areas—which actually control the locations of entry to your compound—then become pre-set up dedicated fields of cross fire counter attack kill zones. Where you can lay a

heavy ambush backed in and covered from the entry way or snipe them as they try to get all the way through and closer if they aren't immediately deterred and retreat away.

If you look closely at the woods picture with the path on the right side, there is also a natural passive tree barrier on both sides going outside the picture for fifty or so meters either way.

It looks like storm/weather damage caused the blockage but it's actually a clever expedient perimeter hack by bending down horizontally and staking down smaller trees cross wise which continue to grow and can't be penetrated except by chopping through. The path is normally used for egress but can be tightly sewn up and protected fairly quickly.

5. Defensive Counter Attack Booby Traps and Other Devices

Don't waste time getting into man-trapping devices like large snares, dead falls, punji pits, etc. These are so labor intensive, time consuming, and mostly don't work, that it's not cost effective in this day and age. And it will be a pain in the ass pulling out dead animals all the time.

Yes, they were used in guerilla warfare but only because the Cong were so piss poor and resource impoverished that they couldn't do anything else. And good Point man could spot them a lot easier than trip wired grenades. When they got their little rice ball hands on better explosive ordnance, they quickly forgot about these primitive sticks and stones methods.

First and foremost and probably least expensive is a passive perimeter far enough away from your main compound/shelter that's too far for an easy pick off gunshot or throwing of firebombs, usually over fifty meters and ideally about a hundred meters, with anti-intrusion alerts and deterrents.

Then augmented by tangle foot and strategic counter attack

defense zones that can be upgraded later in a bad SHTF scenario with extra more effective counter attack equipment that you can make with legal supplies you already have in your stockpile.

Obviously we only touched the subject of base camp perimeter security, and what you still need to know if this article piqued your interest would fill volumes. But if you do have a serious interest in this I'll answer any questions you have in the comments section and/or point you in the right direction for further edification on the subject.

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