

# a day in the life of a would be 'soldier of fortune'

ful. On one occasion I got tangled up in some barbed wire... my shoelaces were caught and I was exposed in open field. The Enemy took repeated potshots at my body and connected three times before the bullet actually broke. By then, I was contemplating picking up the pellet and mashing it on my clothing so as to end the pain — not to mention the humiliation.

Rules explained, target practice finished, and teams formed, the Yellow team headed to its base. It was strategy time. For the first game we decided on every man for himself. This apparently is a strategy commonly adopted by first time players. It is a terrifying experience.

Simulated or no, running through brush and bramble avoiding unknown and unseen enemies gets the adrenalin pumping. During the

ened perception and adrenalin surge as one stalks his game", Hayes organized the first Survival Game in the spring of 1981.

Darren Stannard, who is co-owner of the Survival Game franchise here in Edmonton, reflected on who comes out to play, "Only about 15% of the players are women. We get a lot of professionals coming out as well. Or we may get corporations challenging other corporations... like Safeway will challenge an IGA team."

Asked why so few women showed up (I was the only one the morning I played), Bill Donahue, a Science student, ventured an explanation, "We asked the girls on the floor (5th Mac) to come, but they all panned out. Only one girl explained that she thought the principle of the game was wrong."

started out playing on an every man for himself basis, by the third and fourth rounds we had perfected our team approach, sweeping the field of play in groups of three. With great success, might I add.

I asked the others on my team why they had come out to play. Ralf Kaiser explained that he'd played only once. "I enjoy the strategy and I know everybody out playing today pretty well. Initially, I disagreed totally with the game and then I met Darren and he talked me into coming out to play. I really enjoy it."

**"...one girl explained that she thought the principle of the game was wrong."**

Detractors of the game underline the violence inherent to the game. It does involve shooting other people. Some suggest that the game promotes violence and a desensitization when it comes to violence outside of the game.

There is also the argument that the Survival Game glorifies war with its military tactics, uniforms, and guns. No matter what the detractors' criticism, no concrete evidence has come to light to support these charges.

Dr. Lester Mann of Penn State says that there is "no evidence to indicate this is the kind of thing that creates aggressive activities in people."

Dr. Joseph Levy of the University of Waterloo concurs, suggesting that the game is simply a reminiscence of the bang-bang games of childhood.

**I enjoyed the game immensely.**

After a weekend of playing, I can

say I'm in the pro camp. Bruises, rose brambles, and barbed wire notwithstanding, I enjoyed the game immensely.



first round I simply found a good hiding place, dug in, and watched. Around me shots rang out and people died agonizing deaths. This, I suspect, is the addictive part of the game. Though the premise is fantasy, you have a hard time convincing yourself that the guns those people have in hand are just toys.

The Survival Game, which has thrilled thousands, was the brainchild of Charles Gaines, Hayes Noel, and Bob Gurney of New Hampshire. Striving to come up with a game which would equal the thrill of a safari specifically, the "height-

Stannard noted that women "tended to play a tad less aggressively than the men."

The one element which attracts people to the game is the spirit of competition. To categorize the people who play the game would be unfair as each player participates for his own reason. Among the players are lawyers, doctors, and businessmen, as well as truck drivers, hunters, and students. Common motives cited are the fun, camaraderie, and competition.

The team work aspect was readily apparent. Where the Yellow team

Not being a great player of team sports, I found the group interaction stimulating and enjoyable. Those who support the game claim it sharpens the wits, conditions the body, and develops team skills and discipline. The aches and pains after a weekend of jumping through creeks and diving into ditches attest to the physical benefits of the game.

The satisfaction I felt running back to home base, the red banner around my neck after running over hill and dale, was pure and unadulterated fun. It's like dress up cowboys and Indians for all those kids over 18.

There's no life like it.

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