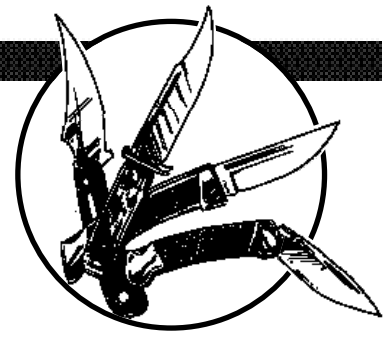


# TWO FROM MERCWORX



**For those who willingly go in harm's way!**

By Steven Dick

**T**here is an argument that proclaims with a smug, all-knowing attitude that today's military has no need for primitive weapons like bayonets and combat knives. It's taken for granted that 21st century wars are fought at long distance by cruise missiles, stealth bombers, heavy artillery, tank cannons and the chain guns of armored personnel carriers. If an enemy somehow escapes all that, then the sheer firepower of infantry shoulder arms and crew served machine-guns will prevent the other side approaching to close combat distance. Finally, if it does come down to knives, then something has gone terribly wrong! Well, I'm here to tell you, if you're an infantry ground pounder in battle, something went terribly wrong a long time before you closed in on the enemy. And there is not much you can do about it, but complete your mission.

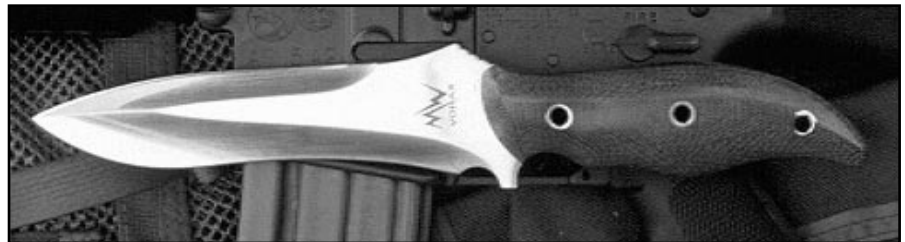
The question really isn't whether something has gone wrong but what are you going to do about it. Winners in combat have a mindset that tells them to use any means necessary, including cold steel, to defeat the enemy. Of course, that does mean having full confidence in one's weapons to carry that out. Some knives automatically give that faith and others do not. The products of Mercworx, a line of military knives I recently had a chance to handle, falls into the "faith" category.

## Knife Details

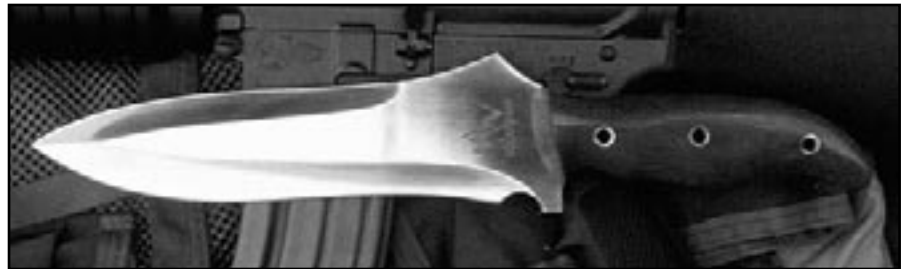
Mercworx has been making limited-run specialty tactical items for a number of years for a group known as the KM. Only recently did they start offering blades to the public. The Equatorian, Sniper and Vorax are all variations on the same flared tip, recurved edge general-purpose combat knife. The Seraphym is a small



Vorax (top) and the Equatorian (bottom) were designed by Mercworx for experienced field soldiers as totally reliable close combat weapons and tools.



The compact Vorax would be author's choice for military field use.



The Equatorian boasts the authority of its 22-ounce blade.

push dagger hideout; the Shiva a conventional dagger and the Orion a handy-looking 3.75-inch utility knife. All models have Micarta handles and 154CM stainless steel blades Rockwelled to 58 RC. There are S30V blades available at a slightly higher cost.

Both the 6-inch Vorax and 8.5-inch

Equatorian were made available for evaluation. The first thing you notice about these knives is the bright mirror polish of the blades. To put that in perspective, dark-coated blades never stay that way in the field, are harder to clean, and rust easier. Moreover, hand-to-hand expert, the late Colonel Rex Applegate, felt a bright blade had a



**Both Knives come with a heavy-duty nylon sheath well suited to carry on military web gear.**

certain intimidation factor during close combat. Mercworx suggests spray painting the blades black before any op where reflection might be a problem.

The points on both knives are wide and double-edged for maximum wound channels during thrusts (remember, these are combat knives). The recurved edge gives more actual cutting surface per inch of blade and concentrates the force of snap cuts on to a smaller area. Along with the wide points, the knives are ground from heavy bar stock just under a quarter inch thick. Mercworx knives are obviously designed with the idea that a combat blade should be able to chop, pry, smash, hammer, slash its way through any obstacle, and in a hurry.

Given its more compact size and its 12-ounce weight, the Vorax would be my first choice as a military field knife. However, if I anticipated hand-to-hand combat I would choose the Equatorian. There is just something about the balance of this massive 22-ounce blade that gives one full confidence in its capabilities.

Both knives come in heavy nylon sheaths with hard plastic liners. The adjustable belt loop will fit on a military web belt, something not all knifemakers think about when designing combat blades. In 154CM, the Vorax retails at \$375 and the Equatorian at \$425. For those looking for a compromise between the compact Vorax and the heavy-duty Equatorian, there is the 7.5-inch blade Sniper, also \$400 in 154CM. All three are available with green chili-pepper handles for an extra \$25.

### **Final Notes**

Obviously, these aren't knives for the average person. On the other hand, we are a country with thousands of our sons and daughters fighting a war on terror across a wide area of the globe. I suspect most all of us know someone that wouldn't mind finding a care package from home with a Mercworx blade in it.

For more information please contact Mercworx, 235 Main St., Ste. 287, Dept CH, Madison, NJ 07940; (908) 619-1013; [www.mercworx.com](http://www.mercworx.com) ●

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