

ZOO MEETS
SPECIAL
FORCES
SNIPERS

HOW TO BE

SNIP

It takes a special kind of person to stare through a scope and take someone's life for a living. We

Over the years, we have met some pretty mean/hard/scary individuals. But it's only when you shake hands with men who can shoot a person dead from a quarter of a mile away, without breaking sweat, that you truly know what intimidation feels like.

Serbian Special Forces officers Goran Numinic and Mickael Kovic* can hit their target in the heart five times out of five from 300m, so we are already quaking before we even say hello.

We've come out to the middle of bloody nowhere, somewhere in Serbia, to celebrate the launch of the ultra-realistic sniping game *Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2*. But given that we're here with two guys who have been at the centre of some of Europe's bloodiest and most brutal

conflicts – they are veterans of the Bosnian and Kosovan wars –

we're not feeling too celebratory.

"If you find a good sniper, you must pay them in gold, because very few people have the mental strength to do it," says Goran. "If you are in the artillery, you load a missile and aim at a target a few kilometres away. If you are in the infantry, you shoot randomly at silhouettes. But if you are a sniper, you are the master of someone's life. You look through the scope and you see a person. You see him, his face and his emotions and because of this, you are killing a human being. It is an execution."

Do you reckon you could pull the trigger and live with the consequences? Here is Goran and Mickael's checklist of the skills top snipers need in their armoury...

LONER MENTALITY

"Sniping is a mental game and, because of that, the best snipers are people who can live alone in their own world," says Goran. "Take me, for example. My family are all hunters, so growing up, I was always in nature and almost always alone and because of this, I'm very

independent. I don't need anyone to pat me on the back and tell me I've done well.

"If you need me to do something, don't worry about it. Just leave me and I will do it. That's the mentality you need from a sniper."

PATIENCE

"Snipers must stay in position for as long as it takes to make the shot or escape a spotter," says Goran. "One sniper I know had to lie in a swamp for two days before she could kill her target and a friend of

Mickael's had to stay in the same place for eight days after

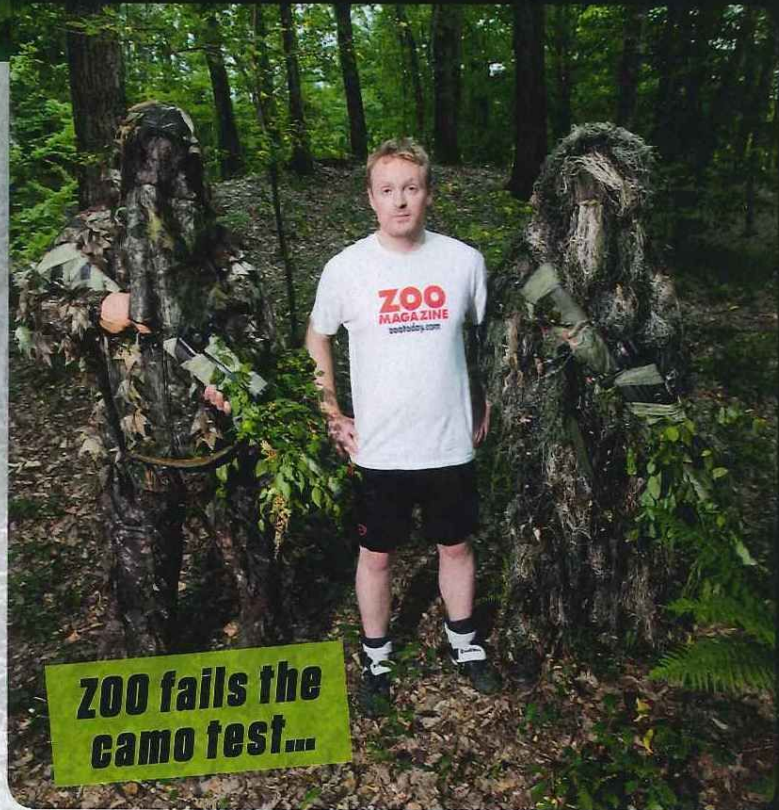
being half-seen by a spotter during the war in Kosovo.

"The enemy couldn't pinpoint his exact whereabouts, so they waited for him to move. He didn't. He stayed put for eight days and, then, on the ninth day, they stopped looking and he escaped. Now he can't urinate properly because of what he put his body through, but he got home and that's all that matters."

AN ESCAPE ROUTE

"When you go behind enemy lines, you either become a hunter, who is going to be feared, or a stupid hunted animal, who is going to be slaughtered," says Mickael. "Which one you become depends on you, your brain and your plan.

"You need to find a →



A

FER

went to Serbia to meet two men who are the best/nuttier in the business

*Goran and Mickael are not their real names. We changed them for good reason – because they said they'd hunt us down if we didn't

**"You lie there
and wait to kill"**

covert position that is at least 200m away from your target and has a good, well-covered escape route, because if you don't, it's a suicide mission."

FEAR

"Good snipers are sh*t-scared when they are sent on a mission, and so they should be," says Goran.

"If you don't feel fear, you are crazy and will die soon, because you will get too cocky, make a bad mistake and get captured or taken out."

BALLS

"Anyone can be a hero when they are talking at a table, but it's a very different thing being a hero when someone jumps out in front of you with a gun," says Goran. "I didn't want to get myself into that situation and be unable to respond, so before I went to Kosovo, myself and a friend tested each other.

"We put bulletproof vests on, stepped about two to three metres away from each other and then took it in turns to shoot each other with .22 calibre pistols. I don't know whether it is scarier to look at a gun being aimed at you or to fire your gun at somebody else. Both are f**king scary.

"But once we'd done it, we knew what was going on and how it felt. We knew we could take the shot and go to war."

TUNNEL VISION

"The top rule of sniping is never look your mark in the eyes, because they are the mirrors of the soul and you will never forget them," reveals Goran.

"That said, I've heard some stories about a Russian female sniper who only goes for the eyes and has more than 50 victims. This scares me, because if she can do that, she's not normal. She is a pure, cold-blooded executioner."

**"Never look in a target's eyes,
or you'll never forget them..."**

INNER ZEN

"Your rifle's crosshair moves when your heart beats," says Goran. "Because of this, the only way to ensure accuracy is to settle down and control your breathing before you take a shot, and because of this, Russia is trying to control its snipers' heartbeats.

"It is still secret research at the moment, but from what

I hear, they are putting their top shooters through medical testing in a bid to slow their heartbeats down, as this will allow them to shoot between beats and therefore increase accuracy."

BOOBS

"Women make better snipers because their No1 concern is coming back to protect their family," reveals Mickael. "Men, however, go for glory. They think about how many people they can kill and that's not good, as everyone who tries that dies. They may find some glory initially but, trust me, they will die in the end."

**Serbian Special
Forces snipers**



STIFF UPPER LIP

"Do you know what the best weather for snipers is?" asks Goran. "It's rain, thunder and sh*tty conditions, because nobody else is outside. And do you know what the best time is? It's between 3am and 5am, because everybody else is sleeping. Snipers must use the elements and darkness to sneak into the best position.

"And by best, I don't mean the most comfortable. If you have to lie in a puddle, then you will lie there for as long as you need to. If you have to lie in the beating sun, you will lie there for as long as you need to - no questions or moaning. If you're cold, f**k you. If you're burned, f**k you. If you need water, f**k you. You don't get anything.

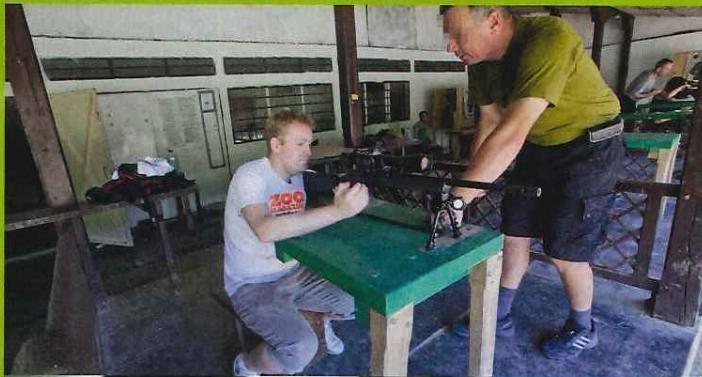
"Your job is to lie there and wait to kill. Snipers can accept this. Most people can't."

ZOO MAN
SCOPES OUT
HIS TARGET



SNIPING AIN'T EASY

Our military dreams come unstuck in a forest three hours south of Serbian capital Belgrade



Despite realising that we possess pretty much none of the attributes our scary Serbian hosts have told us are required for sniping, the time has come to give it a go. And guess what? Our first five shots with a sniper rifle from 100m *all* hit the target. Someone call the SAS, because we're awesome.

"Just you wait," laughs Goran. "There aren't many tables or chairs in a warzone."

Goran's point? He has two, actually. First, firing a zeroed-in sniper rifle from a table, while sitting on a chair, is like going 10-pin bowling with bumpers. And second, it's one thing firing at a stationary target on a range - it's very different looking through the crosshair and ending a life.

"YOU F**KED UP"

Fast-forward 36 hours and we are lying in the undergrowth, impatiently waiting to ambush four unsuspecting victims (with blanks, obviously). We've been stationary for seven minutes, but it feels like well over half an hour. Our heart is racing, our brow is soaking and our senses are primed. Every sound makes us twitch; every bite makes us itch and, then, four bodies saunter around the corner.

They're over 100m away and have no idea of our existence and yet we can see the colour or their eyes and the logos on their clothing. We take a deep breath and prepare to pull the trigger, but then, something unexpected rushes into the line of fire. It's Goran's son - an innocent, smiling 12-year-old schoolboy. We can't shoot him, so we freeze. Then, realising the group is getting closer and closer, we

panic and fire quickly at the person furthest away from the child. We miss. Mission part one: failed.

The second element is to remain undetected. We attempt to do this by lying motionless, a little to the left of where we shot. Bad idea. We only succeed in lowering our testicles onto a pointy tree stump. Cue a piercing scream and an almighty rustle of the bushes. Mission part two: failed.

"We can see you," taunts Goran. "You've f**ked up and you're dead."

"YOU'RE DEAD"

Our first live sniping drill could have gone better, and so could our second. Tasked with finding the best spot to take out a target eating on a balcony, we ignore the obvious thick, dark forest and hike along a river, scramble up a hillside and hide behind a tree. Well, we say hide. Although we were in the shade, there was sunlight directly behind us, which meant we were lit up like a stage actor in a spotlight.

"I don't think I've ever seen anyone take up a worse spot," states Goran. "You f**ked up and..." We know, we're dead.



→ Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2 will be available to buy on Xbox 360, PS3 & PC early this year. For further information, visit www.sniperghostwarrior.com

