

FIRST EDGE 5150 ELITE FIELD KNIFE

Okay, so there may be a secret to the name here. A "5150" code when I was a cop in California meant the suspect was crazy or acting insane. It was part of the Health & Safety Code number. But even if it's just an interesting coincidence, it still applies to this burly cutter. The knives coming from this company (made in California, oddly enough, of exotic Swedish ELMAX steel) are, well, crazy-tough and insanely practical. In fact, the test model (looking nice here in the photo before I banged it around), is actually currently in use in training and deployment with US Special Forces. So, it really is, um ... crazy-tough. Like the guys who rely on it.

This full-tang fixed blade is 0.210" thick, which is within a gnat's hair of being a quarter of an inch thick! I find being just undersized, though, makes it a bit handier, as the 0.250"



knives tend to be bulky in my medium-sized hands. But nonetheless, it weighs 13.4 ounces or 1.25 pounds including the rugged sheath. No lightweight here. It's flat-ground (thank you) and has coarse-textured G10 handle scales. The lanyard hole means you won't lose it and the Swedish steel is corrosion resistant, but blackened, along with the fittings.

Things I like: The slightly squarish handle so the knife doesn't turn in your hand, and it's easy to index it. The 6" blade is big enough to do actual work, but not so big as to be unwieldy. Hardened to 60-61 HRC, the knife keeps an edge but can be readily sharpened, which is a good thing. You can use the pommel to strike or pound, and the area around the transition from blade to handle is contoured to help keep your fingers safe, with a thumb too. This

knife and sheath is basic — but sophisticated in design elements. Less is usually more and this knife is both. What don't I like? Not a single thing. If you need a serious cutting tool you can rely on to save a life, you've found it. It was advertised at \$225 at the time of writing. *For more info:* www.americanhandgunner.com/index, Ph: (877) 333-1833

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