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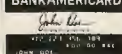
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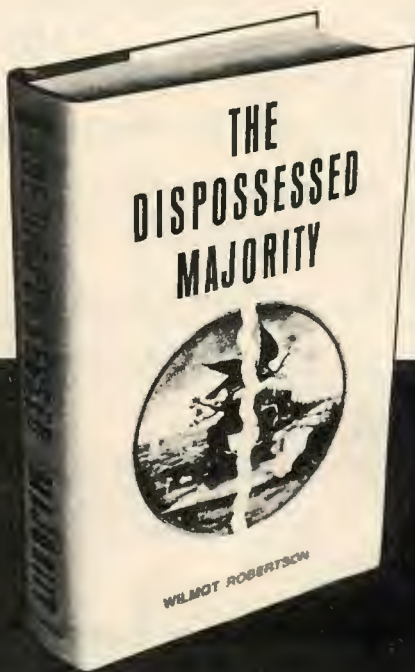
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## Silent Treatment Is Given Book Defending American Majority

CENSORSHIP can take many forms. This is the story of a book that was published but might as well have been suppressed because it has been denied avenues of publicity and distribution to get itself read.

The book is called *The Dispossessed Majority* and it concerns race relations in the United States, recited from the point of view of a member of the white majority. A statement from the publisher about the silent treatment accorded this book concludes:

The censorship of silence imposed by book critics and the book trade on "The Dispossessed Majority" does not prove the abrogation of freedom of thought in this country. After all, the book did get published. But in the final analysis, what good is the freedom to write, if there is very limited freedom to publicize what was written. In order to defend America's largest population group against a continuous stream of often vicious racist propaganda, it would seem that the rights defined in the First Amendment should apply to the dissemination of ideas as well as to their expression.

*The Dispossessed Majority*, by Wilmot Robertson . . . is neither obscene nor pornographic. It is a serious discussion of race, amply documented with references to the literature of the field. The author has read widely and writes with apparent familiarity on many aspects of the subject. He covers the concept of race, the racial composition of the United States and a split in the ranks of the majority. Some of the chapters cover the

[majority-minority] clash in terms of culture, politics, economics, law and foreign policy. While the author's views are controversial they are expressed clearly and logically as a defense of the white Europeans who settled and developed the United States.

The publisher points out that in the last several decades, the ratio of books about American population groups has been 1,000 to one in favor of the minorities and against the majority . . .

The press and the rest of the media have almost totally ignored the book . . . Libraries and book stores have refused to stock or display [it] and standard publications of the book trade have not listed it. Difficulty was experienced, the publisher says, in placing advertisements . . .

Among those who speak well of the book is Devin Garrity, a New York book publisher. Rating it as "a major book under any circumstances," he states: "Instead of meekly accepting the assigned role of has-been, Wilmot Robertson, speaking for the majority 'thinks the unthinkable and says the unsayable,' as one reader puts it. And he does it in superb English prose . . ."

*The Dispossessed Majority* now has appeared in paperback form [586 pages, including index]. It is priced at [\$5.00 postpaid] and may be ordered by mail from Howard Allen Enterprises, Inc., Box 76, Cape Canaveral, Fla., 32920.

T. R. WARING  
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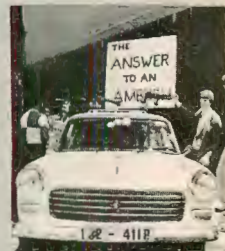
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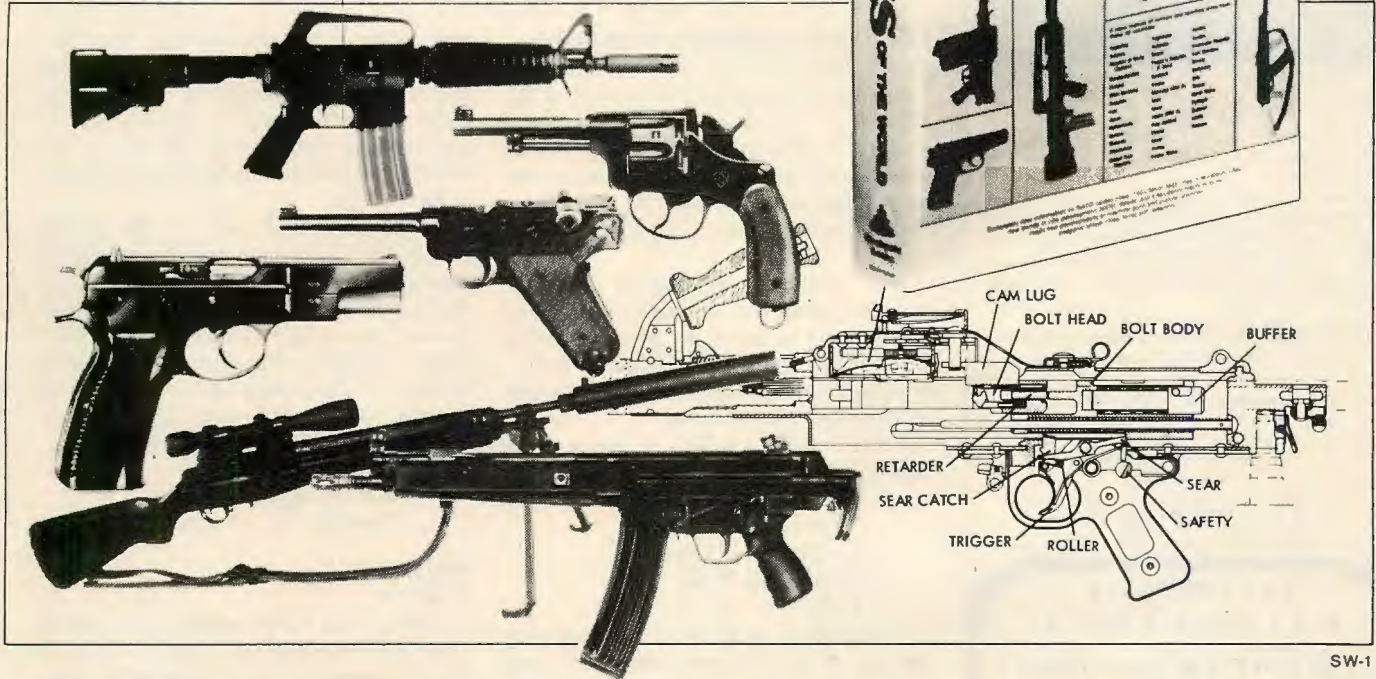
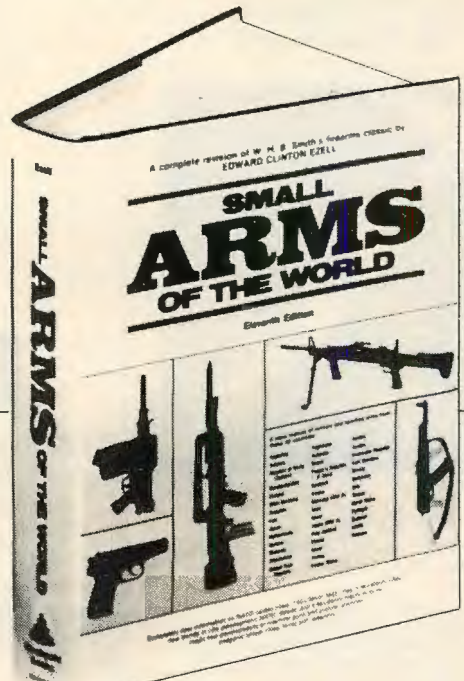
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Cover Photo: Rhodesian patrol emerges from river crossing in southeastern operational area. These "troopies" travel light. By U.S. standards their web gear leaves much to be desired but Rhodesians stoutly claim they do the best with what they have. (Credit: Al J. Venter)

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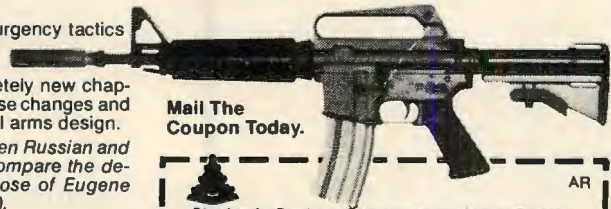
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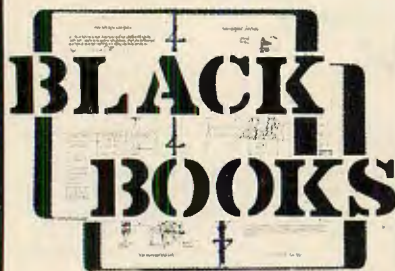
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**RHODESIAN AIRBORNE WOUNDED ...**

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Best wishes from us all and God bless.

Yours very sincerely,  
Pete Kelly  
Hon. Treasurer  
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Bulawayo  
RHODESIA

**CUBAN UPDATE? ...**

Dear Sirs:

I would like to take this opportunity to compliment you on the excellence of your publication. Continue to keep the articles factual and interesting with a minimum of B.S. and you'll be in business a long time. I am waiting expectantly for your staff's evaluation of the Russian-Cuban intervention in the Horn of Africa and the plight of the Somali people as a result. Also, an update on the war of libera-

tion being conducted against the illegitimate puppet dictators of Angola and the Cuban "mercenaries" who keep them in power would be greatly appreciated along with your assessment of the developing civil war in Nicaragua (shades of Bert Levy).

In the March 13 issue of *Newsweek* magazine, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Andrew Young was quoted as saying, "I don't believe that Cuba is in Africa because it was ordered there by the Russians. I believe that Cuba is in Africa because it really has shared a sense of colonial oppression and domination." Does he really believe that crap?

Yours truly,  
Randy Rogers  
Quesnel, B.C., Canada

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*We would appreciate being advised of any such commando units claiming to be affiliated with or representing SOF or Omega Group. All such information will be considered confidential.*

—The Editors

**FREE SPEECH ...**

Gentlemen:

I feel I must start off by saying I think your mag. is great. It is that because you both write and edit well and most importantly, are unafraid to speak the truth. I do not always agree with what you print but even then I'm glad someone is willing to use our least used and much abused right to free speech and press. It seems to be another of the media which the government is trying to "guide."

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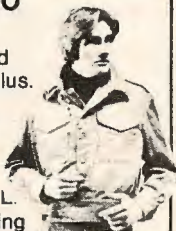
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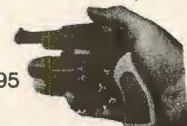
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I am a young American serviceman. My purpose in becoming a member of the armed forces was not to be wasted on someone else's turf, but I will, if it keeps the baddies away from home, and the other guy wants and needs our help—then it's my job. I'm writing this to thank you at Omega Group Ltd. both for myself and those of my comrades here who intend to survive the next "Police Action."

Your magazine provides us with written material which helps us to fill in the gaps in our slip-shod training. For these insights into areas of warfare from situation to strategic, your excellent sources on weapons and tactics, and your magazine as a whole, again and forever thank you.

Yours sincerely,  
Sgt. Jerome J. Kavanaugh  
Seymour-Johnson A.F.B., N.C.

### M-16 PACKS PUNCH

Dear Sirs:

In my opinion *Soldier of Fortune* is a fantastic magazine and normally all articles are of the same quality. I have found what I think to be an exception in September's issue. "M-16: Terror or Toy?" by Chuck Taylor is the subject of several blunders. I agree entirely with the author's choice of the 7.62mm cartridge over the 5.56mm one. However, I do not feel that it is as useless as he would have everybody believe. The M-14 is a far better weapon than the M-16 but the latter

does pack a fair punch. Also his story of the duel with a certain NVA is hard to accept. Those 20 rounds delivered approximately 25,000-ft. pounds of force to the enemy's chest. If anything will still stand after that, it shouldn't go down with a mere .308 slug. I would use a 155mm shell and pray that it worked. Even if this tale is true, I believe it ruins the credibility of Taylor as an expert on the subject.

Yours truly,  
David Bartlett  
St. John's, Newfoundland

Chuck Taylor replies:

*I cannot agree with you on the subject of the 5.56mm/.223 as a battle cartridge. Many years ago, it was found, much to the chagrin of those who perpetuate the energy theory, that intrinsic impact energy was not the reason that living things fell down and died when hit, at least with small arms projectiles.*

*Regardless of the fact that the NVA trooper who was the subject of my example in the article absorbed a large amount of energy from my sustained fire into his chest, he remained on his feet. If you think you were upset about it, I hope you can imagine how much the incident upset me! So, let's examine the mechanics of the problem.*

*First, it is a commonly known fact that, after the first round impacts a living target, the nervous system shuts down almost completely, as a protective*

*mechanism. Therefore, any subsequent hits are not even felt by the target, provided that the target is of the determined type. By this I mean, determined to get you! So regardless how much energy the NVA absorbed, he felt little or nothing after the first round hit him. His entire point of existence was to get me.*

*Second, the NVA did go down and cease to be a threat to me immediately upon being hit in the torso by the 7.62mm/.308, and he did bounce a foot off the ground when hit with the second 7.62 round. I was there and witnessed it. The entire incident upset me a great deal and, as a result, I rid myself of the '16 and found the best weapon available to me that fit my mission: the Thompson SMG. It never failed me and the M16 did. Need I say more?*

### AR-10s IN VANCOUVER

Dear Sirs:

In reply to your article, "Great Expectations: AR-10" (Jan./78), these guns are available in Vancouver, at LEVER ARMS SERVICE, 771 Dunsmuir St., Vancouver, British Columbia V6C 1M9. The price is \$400 Canadian, \$485 with original bayonet, which in itself is a collector's item, as opposed to the reported price of \$775 in Ontario. I myself bought one several months ago and like the report cannot fault it . . .

Yours cordially,  
G. Mutton  
Vancouver, B.C., Canada



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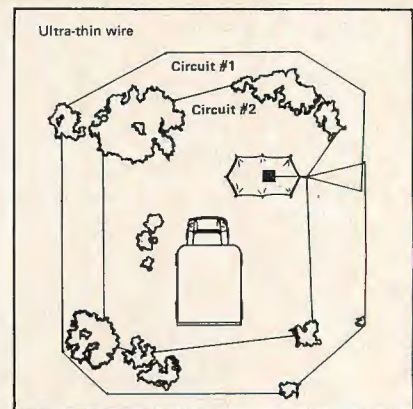


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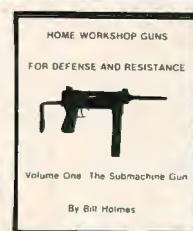
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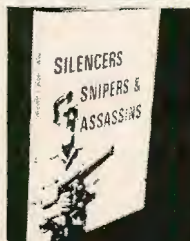
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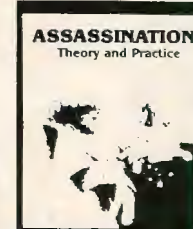
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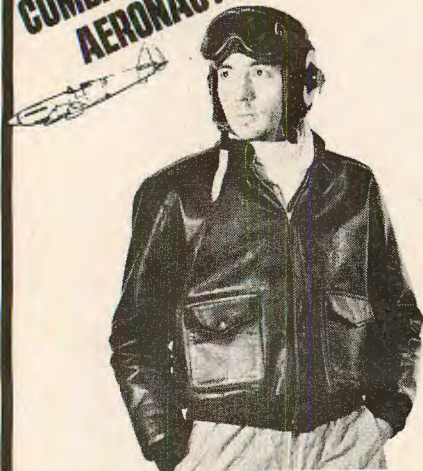
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# STEELE ON KNIVES & KNIFE FIGHTING

Send letters meant for this column to author at Soldier of Fortune, Box 693, Boulder, Colo. 80306. If you desire a personal quick reply, send a self-addressed stamped envelope. Because of the sensitive nature of the subject matter, initials, rather than names of writers, will be used in print, unless requested otherwise.

Q. I said in my last letter I would give you some info on the Blackie Collins "Benchmark" Ninja boot knife. Got the Ninja and Collins' shoulder harness last week and have been messing with them since then. I think I can safely say that the only two things worthy of notice in the entire system of knife/sheath/shoulder harness are the "injection moulded" Lexan handle and the method of knife retention in the sheath.

The knife is very conventional in design. A 4x1-inch spear point blade made of 3/16-inch 440C. The handle is also 4 inches long, 2 inches wide at the "guard," 1-3/16 inch at mid-point, 1/4 inch at the butt, and 7/16 inch thick. The false edge on my knife is not sharpened, and would take some more grinding before it could be sharpened. It is also ground on only one side of the blade. The Lexan handle is a dull, almost black color; non-reflecting, but it doesn't offer the secure grip of Gerber's armorhide. There are two pieces of alloy tubing through the handle. The "rivet" closest to the guard forms one part of the retaining system.

The sheath is made of layered, fairly thin leather. There is a short, longitudinal strap on the back, with a buckle one inch in from the tip. A 1 1/2-inch belt is about the largest that could be accommodated. Running out from the throat end, on the back, is a 1 1/2-inch long by 1-inch wide "tongue." This tongue has a flat spring inside its two layers of leather. This spring forces a short tapered pin into the hollow handle "rivet" closest to the guard. This is the method by which the knife is held in the sheath, and, in my opinion, is the only really important feature of the entire rig.

I was rather disappointed by the knife and its accoutrements. With the excep-



tion of the pin-in-hole retainer, it does not come up to the standards that you expect from someone with Collins' reputation.

Although Collins' brochure mentions "Production Cutlery Equipment," "Benchmark" consists of Collins only. I ordered mine in July and finally got it in September. Good for a custom knife but poor for a production job. I tend to think that mine came a little sooner than most. I wrote six letters, under the impression that "Benchmark" had more than Collins' two hands.

R.L.W., Harlem, Georgia

A. A good hideout knife is hard to find. The best one I have seen lately is the "Wee Hawk" made by Jody Samson (Box 1423, Burbank, CA) who works out of Cooper's shop. Mine is a special all-steel version of this knife which usually comes with a wood micarta handle. The Wee Hawk is 8 3/4 inches overall, with a 3 3/4-inch blade of 3/16-inch 154CM stock. The blade is a modified clip point, with thumb ridges. The handle has no protruding guard, but only an integral, concave quillon. It weighs only four ounces. I had a special friction-fit sheath made for it, with two buckle-straps for attachment to forearm, bicep, or ankle (velcro might or might not be an improvement for the straps).

A substantial quillon is useless on a small knife. It doesn't help fend off an opponent's blade, and it does get in the way of a fast draw as well as limit the places it can be concealed effectively. Besides, the short knife should be used to cut the opponent's knife hand, not block his blade (although if you keep it out of sight until the last minute you may not have to block anything).

Those who know Jody Samson will recall that his catchword is "design." He believes that a really beautiful knife is one that is original in concept, not just a conventional design with decorations.

Q. I have read your book on knife fighting a couple of times and found it most informative. The information in it I hope to carry with me always, but, at

the same time, I hope I never have to use it in my job as a Game Ranger.

Could you please tell me what you look for in a defense knife? What type steel? What length? Handle material? Blade and point style? and about the tang?

What do you feel about the John Ek combat knives? I did not notice them in your book.

R.B., Lake Havasu City, Ariz.

A. The job of Game Ranger, which used to consist of conducting nature walks, trapping dangerous bears, and watching for fires, has turned into full time police work. Rapes, murders, and an incredible amount of thievery have come to the great outdoors. For some, taking dope is the only way to enjoy nature's wonders. In many states Rangers must now carry sidearms, not just to shoot rabid animals or trap poachers, but to enforce the laws against a variety of city crimes.

In my opinion, Gerber is the only factory producing really good defense knives in this country. The Mark II is an excellent military sideknife. The Mark I is a fine boot knife. And the FS II is a good folding knife for emergency self defense. Among custom makers there is more selection of high quality defense knives. I prefer those made by Randall, Samson, Cooper, Crawford, Lofgreen, and a few others.

For a military knife I prefer a six to eight-inch blade. For a concealment knife I prefer a three to five-inch blade. I can recommend only 440C and 154CM steel, since they are highly rust-resistant as well as holding a good edge. For handle material I recommend solid steel (i.e., no handle, just a stainless tang), micarta, or aluminum (with a nonslip surface). A concealed tang allows more variation in handle shape, but a full tang is somewhat stronger; I like them both and have seen good knives of both designs.

There are good defense knives with clip point, double-edge, or spear point blades, but I prefer the clip point with sharpened false edge. One of the most beautiful knives I have acquired lately is a clip point boot knife made by Kojiro Oda, the Tokyo-born partner of one of the so-called "top three" in custom knifemaking (and who makes many of the knives which go out under that other man's name). Oda signs his own knives "Kuzan," a name which one day may be as famous as Masamune, the fabled maker of samurai swords. This particular boot knife has a five-inch clip point blade with tapered spine of 154CM steel, with stainless double-quillon, butt cap and escutcheon plate. The handle is ebony, and the sheath has a tapering top to hold in the guard.

John Ek knives were all right in World War II when there were not many good knives around, but their design and workmanship have not improved since then,

while their price has increased tremendously. Their handles are oversized and underfinished. The blade shape and grinding are imperfect. The sheath is decidedly second rate. They rust and discolor almost immediately with use. Just because Franklin Roosevelt and Georgie Patton owned Ek knives does not mean you should. The World War II Ek knives are collector's items, but the modern ones, mostly made by John's son Gary, would not seem to be good investments. You can get a better knife at less cost from Gerber.

Q. I've been reading with great interest the various ways mentioned of carrying the Gerber Mk. I boot knife. Due to the city I work in, mine is always with me (along with my Colt Mk. IV .45 auto), but sometimes I'll have shoes on rather than boots. With shoes, the easiest way I know of is to buy a few of those slip-on elastic ankle supportters from a sporting goods store. I wear it on my left ankle carrying the Mk. I on the right side of the ankle, slightly to the rear. The knife is in between the sock and ankle supporter which is over the sock. Loose pants around the ankles are advised and you'll hardly feel that the knife is there. I've also blued the blade and applied flat black to the clip on the sheath. This system works very well, and the only disadvantage is that it's not quite as fast on the draw as from on the belt.

C.G., Elizabeth, N.J.

A. Boot knives can be a problem when you don't wear boots. Personally, I have found the folder to be the most convenient street knife. However, the folder usually has several drawbacks: it is slow into action, its blade is more designed for hunting than fighting, and it is weak where the tang joins the handle. Among the better folders are the Gerber FS II, the Puma 265, and the Barry Wood Mark 2.

Q. What are the blade lengths of the Barry Wood Mark 2 and Gerber FS II? Are there any locations in Hawaii where I can purchase either?

Are you going to have any how-to picture articles on knife fighting in *Soldier of Fortune*? One more thing, is your book *Secrets of Modern Knife Fighting* available in Hawaii?

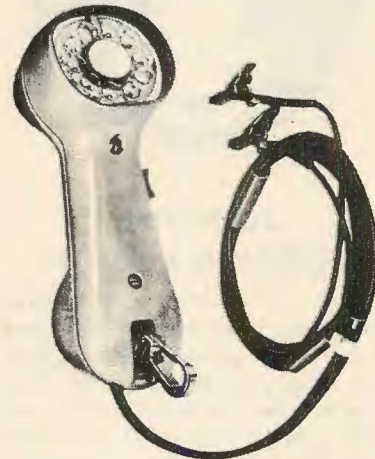
C.K., Honolulu, Hawaii

A. The Gerber FS II has a 3½-inch blade. The Barry Wood Mark 2 also has a blade slightly less than four inches long. Gerber knives are available in Hawaii; or you can write to Gerber Legendary Blades, 14200 S.W. 72nd Ave., Portland, Oregon 97223. For a Mark 2 you should write to Barry Wood, 38 S. Venice Blvd., Venice, California 90291.

I plan to, on occasion, put how-to knife fighting articles with photos in this column. Offhand I don't know if there is a

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distributor for my book in Honolulu. In any case, you can obtain it by sending \$9.95 to Phoenix Press, Box 693, Boulder, Colo. 80306.

Q. As the owner of three knife wounds I do feel that it should be brought home to your readers that carrying a knife does not mean that they are armed and ready for trouble! They are not even as well off as someone carrying a .25 "Baby Browning" for self protection; they at least do not have to get within arm's length of their adversary!

Some years ago the black maid working for me served my breakfast with her face so puffed up she was barely recognisable; on being asked what had happened, she told me that her "boy friend" had beaten her up and was returning that night to kill her. That evening she was told to remain in the house and watch for the coming of the boy friend. At about 8 p.m. she told me he had gone into her quarters. I stuck a pistol in my belt and started to go out when the owner of the house begged me not to take a gun or cause any trouble. Stupidly I heeded this request and went to the quarters unarmed. The man was sitting in the servant's quarters and I asked him to leave; he was in a very aggressive mood and told me to \_\_\_\_\_ off. I took him under the arm and half shoving and carrying I escorted him up the drive, with him swearing and cursing all the while. When we reached the gate I opened it and pushed him out. As he staggered back he put his hand in his pocket, and for some reason this, more than all the cussing, caused me to lose my cool, and I jerked open the gate and went for him. He pulled his hand from his pocket holding a knife with about a four-inch blade. He was very small, and I am 6'2" and 230 pounds. I aimed a karate kick at his testicles, and as quick as a flash he side-stepped and stabbed me in the middle of the thigh muscle about three inches above the knee. He swung at me again and stabbed me in the left leg, which I had raised to protect my guts. But he had now come too close, and I grabbed his coat lapels. His right arm went under my left, and he plunged the knife into my back; it hit the ribs and skidded along, opening up a six-inch cut that took 16 stitches. Now here is the point I want to make. I had been stabbed in the muscles of both legs and my back was opened to the bone, but when I got my hands on that guy I would have killed him except that the flying squad had been called, and they pulled me off him while I was still bouncing him around the street. I was in hospital for a week and couldn't walk properly for three weeks, but that didn't stop me from almost wiping that guy out. At the time I did not feel a thing, and the blood was pouring out of me. I have tremendous respect for adrenalin and feel that this can make a superman out of a normal man in a stress situation; and, as you noted in your article last

month, it is difficult to "switch" someone off with one stroke of a knife, especially if the adrenalin is pumping. Personally I could only recommend the knife as a second back up, or when you have run out of ammo.

A.R.S., South Africa

A. Thank you for your letter. It presents a number of interesting issues for discussion. Since I am not familiar with South African law, I will discuss your situation as if it had occurred in the United States. Even so, most laws on violent behavior stem from a common understanding of human nature.

1. The first rule in handling domestic disputes is to prevent further violence, to try to "calm things down." Since your actions resulted in adding two more casualties to the original one, an alternative course would seem to have been indicated. If the girl refuses to break off all contact with her boyfriend or if she refuses to press charges (in which case the police could be called in) there is little that you can do. If he can gain access to her at any time in the future, any action you take is likely to have only temporary results.

2. Since he was not constituting an "immediate" danger to her at the time you confronted him, the only violation you could act on would be trespass, in which case the owner could have had the police eject him. If you wanted to make a citizen's arrest for his felony assault on the girl, you would be on shaky legal ground to take her word that a felony occurred. In this country, a citizen may make an arrest only for a felony (crime punishable by more than a year in prison) he knows to have occurred, which usually means he must have actually witnessed it. He is civilly and criminally liable if he makes a mistake. He may use force to take such a person into custody or to prevent further violence, but he may not injure someone, then just send him on his way.

3. In my opinion, there are only two ways to deal with the violent misuse of language by ghetto blacks: ignore it, or strike while the man is still getting himself talked up. On the rare occasions when striking is necessary it should be for some actual offense, independent from the talking. I recall one case in which a teenage black had been threatening me for days in the most obscene language imaginable. I ignored it until one day he put up his hands preparing to swing. I kicked him in the leg to get his attention, took out his guard with my left hand, then hit him three times in the mouth with my right fist. His mouth required only minor medical attention, but he never threatened me after that.

4. In this case, if you have decided to order someone off your property, I would suggest that you carry two weapons: a heavy caliber pistol and a truncheon. The pistol should be kept out of sight, used only if he turns up armed. The

truncheon (nightstick or blackjack) should also be kept out of sight until he turns assaultive. At this time he should be subdued with a quick flurry of blows, at which time he can be tied or handcuffed for the police.

5. Never enter such a situation alone if you can avoid it. Police usually "bracket" a potential troublemaker when questioning him. If he takes a swing at the officer in front of him, the officer behind the suspect will choke him out.

6. A knife is indeed a deadly weapon, though it requires training to be used with best effect. In certain circumstances it may be quite justifiable for a small man to compensate for his adversary's size by using a knife. However, his object should be to release his opponent's hold and get away, not to kill him without mercy. It would seem to me that the man you threw out the gate was not too far out of line when he cut at a leg aimed at his privates, but at that stage he would have been wise to get out of there. A knife can be used to deflect a fist or foot attack, but at very close grappling distance it can only be used for penetrating, lethal attacks (the alternative being the knife hand's entrapment by a powerful man's grip).

7. A .25 isn't much better than a knife. You can find yourself grappling with a man you had emptied an entire clip into. The .25 tends to make neat "icepick" holes, with virtually no shock effect. In some ways the knife has the advantage, since it will not run out of ammunition, and it can be used to parry a blow as well as to penetrate vital organs.

8. Adrenalin is okay, but it may block off one's better tactical judgment. Under the influence of adrenalin, sometimes only the most primitive actions are possible: punching, grabbing, shaking, shoving, choking. The biggest advantage to having the right weapon in the right circumstances is that it allows one to react coolly, professionally.



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# Bulletin Board

## **JOB RUMOR MILL:**

### **FNLA & UNITA . . .**

Sources from Kinshasha say UNITA AND FNLA are recruiting out of the Intercontinental Hotel in Kinshasha, Zaire. UNITA is hiring Brits and French, while FNLA is allegedly taking on Yanks. Pay is said to be \$1200 to \$2500 per month, depending upon specialty and experience.

### **Rhodesia . . .**

The Rhodesian government no longer accepts foreigners in their armed forces. Anti-stock theft work on ranches is still available, paying \$250-\$400 Rhodesian per month, with some bonuses and fringe benefits. Letters will not be answered. Prospects should be physically in Salisbury, ask around. The Monomatapa Hotel Lounge is a good place to hang out for information.

### **Eritrea . . .**

Unconfirmed stories indicate some hiring is being done for the Eritrean Liberation Front, which is apparently getting set for an invasion by the Russian and Cuban mercenaries in Ethiopia. One correspondent wrote, "The pay is lousy, the food is terrible, but the action is great." Hiring is being done in Khar-toum.

### **Jobs in Oman? . . .**

The Sultanate of Oman is accepting qualified U.S. instructors for training positions within the military forces. A knowledge of current British weapon systems is desirable. Applications must be made in person through Oman's London embassy.

### **FLY NEW ZEALAND AIR FORCE . . .**

English aviation sources indicate the New Zealand Air Force has vacancies for officers in the following categories: pilots, navigators, and air electronics officers (EW(s)). Vacancies are preferably at the Flight Lieutenant level. Only those with adequate military backgrounds and training need apply to: Chief Migration Officer, New Zealand House, Haymarket, London SW1Y 4TQ England. Quote reference Imm 1/3.

### **COMMANDO CROSSBOW . . .**

The Commando Crossbow, featured in last issue's Quartermaster section, is available through Horizon Industries, P.O. Box 18859, Dept. SOF, Irvine, CA 92713. (714) 835-7232.

### **INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM**

American intelligence sources recently reported the issuance of a joint communique from Havana by Nicaragua's Sandinist National Liberation Front (FSLN) and the Democratic Popular Front for the liberation of Palestine (DPFLP). The

FSLN, previously known as the Sandinistas, has called itself Marxist until recently, when they changed their name to include "National Front," implying they represented other nationalist groups.

Leadership and membership remained Marxist and Cuban-controlled. Both organizations called for the adoption of the PLO's entire platform in Israel as well as condemnation of the U.S. for its alleged support of Nicaragua's President Somoza. The DPFLP is most remembered for its massacre of Israeli schoolchildren at Maalot in May 1974.

The FSLN, although still a Marxist group espousing international terrorism to make their point, now has the apparent support of the U.S. State Department and has established a number of organizations in California, Washington, D.C., and New York City. It has been accompanied in recent demonstrations and rallies by the Workers World Party (WWP) and pro-Castro groups. It is ironic to note that the joint communique indicated that the U.S. is their worst enemy. That doesn't seem to apply to the State Department, but then again, many Americans wonder who their State Department really represents.

### **REFUGEE DONATIONS . . .**

Readers interested in donating money to the Cambodian refugees can do so by sending contributions by international bank draft to:

Mr. Tith Sarun  
c/o Mr. Robert Ashe  
P.O. Box 11-1482  
Bangkok 11, Thailand

or

Mr. Sek Sam Iet  
P.O. Box 2-248  
Bangkok 2, Thailand

Both men are known to Tom Reisinger, SOF staffer, and both are involved in numerous self-help projects among the Cambodians in Thailand. Donations will go directly to the refugees and not through the bureaucracy of a relief agency. IRS reports that contributions are not tax deductible.

Please advise Reisinger of the amount and recipient of any contributions. This information will be kept confidential.

### **R & R REVISITED . . .**

SOF is planning a tour operation from the U.S. to Bangkok with possible additional stops in Manila and Taipei. This would give readers the opportunity to go back to Southeast Asia for a few days to revisit some of the R & R sites, the attractions of which are well-known. SOF Staff is researching the bars and night life of these cities to find and list those that offer the same delights GIs

experienced while on leave from the combat zone. We trust that a great deal of enthusiasm can be generated by this unique travel plan.

A firm structure for the trip has not yet been formalized but will probably consist of an L.A. departure, a short stay in Manila, on to Bangkok for 7-10 days and a final stop in Taipei on the return portion. Total time: 14-16 days.

There will be ample opportunities for optional tours and potential member discounts at night clubs, clothing shops, jewelry stores, etc. In addition, negotiations are now underway for briefings by military officials regarding the situations in the various countries, visits to military camps, a visit to a refugee camp in Thailand and activities with assorted skydiving and SCUBA clubs.

Since we need to know the amount of interest in this proposed venture, we request that all those who might like to go send a letter with their name and address and one dollar for handling costs to: OMEGA GROUP TOURS, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, Colorado 80306. An informational brochure will be forwarded to you as soon as possible but you, of course, will be under no obligation.

We have not yet come up with a solid departure date but are shooting tentatively for about 23 September, 1978. Readers will be kept advised.

If sufficient interest is shown, we hope to arrange eventual monthly or bi-monthly trips. Let us know your reactions to this project.

### **SPONSOR ASIAN REFUGEES . . .**

Anyone interested in possibly being a future sponsor for a refugee family send name, address, and telephone number to Tom Reisinger c/o SOF. Efforts are going to be initiated to get government approval for the admission of more refugees into the U.S. As of now, priority is given to "boat people" from Vietnam with relatives in the U.S. This leaves those "unfortunates" who were not linked to the U.S. government stranded in various refugee camps in Thailand. The average people need help too so write and urge your congressman, senators, etc. to pass more equitable legislation.

### **SUBSCRIPTION INFO . . .**

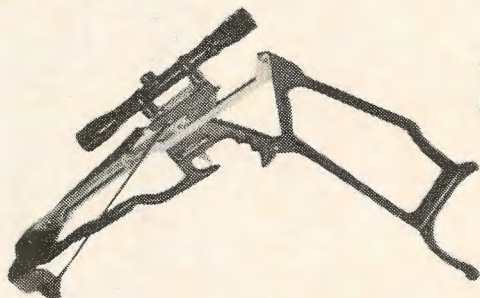
All subscribers be advised that all queries regarding subscription problems should be forwarded to: SOF, c/o Computer Dynamics, Inc., 4044 S. 28th St., Arlington, VA 22206. Phone: (702) 578-3000.

(continued on page 82)

# Attention Collectors

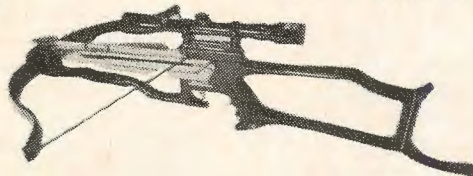
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Draw weight .....150 lbs.  
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# FULL AUTO

BY CHUCK TAYLOR

Ruger now producing military version of 5.56mm Mini-14

In spite of repeated denials that Ruger does not engage in the manufacture and sales of military-type weapons, a new, obviously military version of their 5.56 mm/.223 Mini-14 has appeared. Designated the AC-556K (Kurz: short) the new weapon, pictured herein, features a muzzle brake, folding stock, capacity for fully automatic fire via a selector switch, and a ventilated handguard. Sure looks military as hell to me!

Although I attempted to obtain a specimen of this weapon from Ruger for testing, evaluation, and subsequent dissemination of the results to SOF readers, I was advised via letter by the Ruger management that the company will sell the weapon "... only to Government Agencies." Therefore, they "... would be unable to furnish us with test or evaluation guns."

I'm also told that the new gun features an 11.5-inch barrel and a three-shot burst control. Who in the world would need this type of weapon in sufficient quantities to make manufacturing of them economically feasible other than military entities ... somewhere? Maybe the same countries in Latin and South America that received thousands of the



regular, selective-fire Mini-14s in the last 15 months are stepping up to the new version. Who knows ... and Ruger isn't telling!

Unfortunately, several things are wrong with the new AC-556K. First, the front sight, as with the regular Mini-14, does not have protective "wings" to alleviate the danger of damage to the front sight blade during field handling. Second, the folding stock consists of a tubular, hinged steel armature which folds up to the right side of the weapon itself. The problem here is that it is hinged at the rear of the weapon's receiver in a similar manner to the old U.S. cal. .30 M1A1 folding stocked carbine. Those of you out there who have had your hand pinched by that damned stock know precisely what I'm talking about. Those of you who don't ... be advised that it hurts! In addition to this, the muzzle brake cannot possibly be adequate in reducing recoil and/or flash

any more than the standard M16 three-prong or birdcage unit will do it on a CAR15 or XM177E2. It's simply too small.

While the basic design of the Mini-14 is unquestionably sound, the lack of necessary refinements on the weapon, and its newer mutation, cannot be ignored or overlooked. A military weapon is a military weapon, regardless of official policy statements, and, this being the case, it should have the necessary features to allow it to be efficient at its intended mission.

Based on the above, I certainly cannot comment favorably or recommend this weapons-system for battlefield use. However, in the interest of informing SOF readers of the weapon's existence, the following is submitted:

#### Mini-14 (AC-556)

Caliber: 5.56mm/.223 Remington

Length Overall: 37.25 inches

Weight: 6 lbs, 6 oz.

Magazine capacity: 5, 10, 20, & 30 rd. box mags

Barrel Length: 18.5 inches

#### AC-556K

Caliber: 5.56mm/.223 Remington

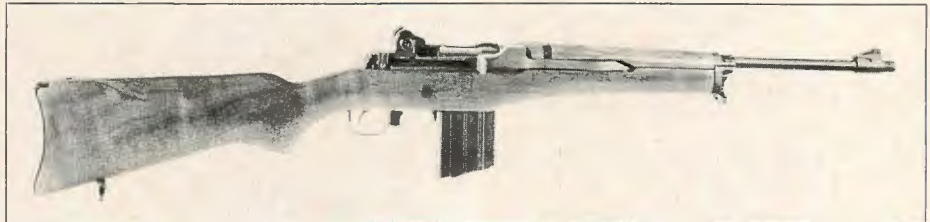
Length Overall: 23.0 inches folded

Weight: 6 lbs, 15 oz.

Magazine Capacity: same as Mini-14/AC-556 rifle

Barrel Length: 13 inches w/flash suppressor/  
muzzle brake.

**Standard AC-556 (select-fire Mini-14) being sold to U.S. and various foreign governments in spite of repeated denials of military weapons manufacturing by Ruger.**



#### SUPER .45 Auto mags now available

While my general field of endeavor is the MG in its various guises, I also am involved in combat handgunning consultation, competition, and instruction to a very large degree. I recently was provided with a sampling of the new Laka, stainless-steel .45 mags for use with my combat-customized Colt Lightweight .45 Commander which accompanies me wherever I travel.

I had the opportunity to thoroughly test them, even in conditions of extreme moisture and dirt, and can truthfully report that these are the best damned .45 mags I have had the pleasure to use! The samples provided me functioned superlatively, without exception even when filthy, which doesn't happen with any other .45 mags that I am familiar with ... and I'm familiar

**Newest version of selective fire Ruger Mini-14, the AC-556K, features muzzle brake/flash suppressor, ventilated handguard, 11.5-inch barrel, and folding stock.**

with all of them, as far as I know, having toted a .45 all over the world!

Laka Manufacturing is offering these mags in bright brushed stainless, a sand-blasted stainless, and a conventional steel mag with a stainless follower, for which I must admit I see no use whatsoever. The stainless mags are not much higher in price than the conventional steel-bodied types, and are so superior to them that I will never go back to any other type magazine or recommend any other type but the Laka stainless.

The secret of the mag's reliability lies in its reinforced follower. Instead of dreaming up some gizmo-type follower, Laka realized that the only weakness in the normal .45 mag follower was that it has the tendency to bend out of its "L-shape" with prolonged use. So, he re-designed it, with reinforcement at its critical points to eliminate fatigue and its resultant bending of the follower, which, as we all know, cause 99 percent of the malfunctions in any auto-pistol.

The end result is a rustproof, super-fast-to-dump and reload, reliable, well-made magazine that is well worth the \$12.00 price tag as far as I'm concerned.

Laka also markets the same type mag for the .38 Super, which should be a boon to .38 Super disciples, without question.

Interested parties should contact Laka Industries, Inc., P.O. Box 837, 62 Kinkel Street, Westbury, L.I., NY 11590. If you want excellent quality, design, and almost total reliability, this magazine is a must for you. I'd bet my life on it!

#### Source of Quality Military Items Now Available

Brock's, P.O. Box 33242, Decatur, GA 30033, sent me a sampling of some of the items carried in his inventory of military equipment recently, in response to my search for a good source of referral for this type of equipment to my readers.

Brock's sent me an XM28E4 Riot Control Mask, and M7A3 Grenade-launcher for the M1 Garand, and the launching sight for same. I can report that all of the items were *brand new in the original wrappings*, not used or reproduction junk.

In this age of gimmickry and hype-advertising on a buyer-beware basis (!), it's refreshing to know that someone still provides honest, efficient service to the potential customer of military-type personal equipment.

#### SMG's still king of close-in combat

Several weeks ago, I was invited to an arms exhibition/demonstration for the Kansas ARNG, Kansas Highway Patrol, Great Bend Kansas Police Department, and about 20 other police departments.

Among the participants in the program was a gentleman named John Farnam,

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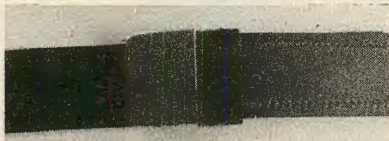
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### SPECIFICATIONS:

Belt: 1½" wide; black or brown.

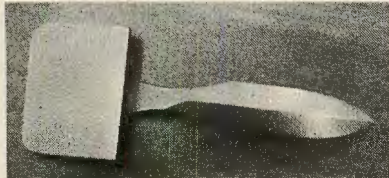
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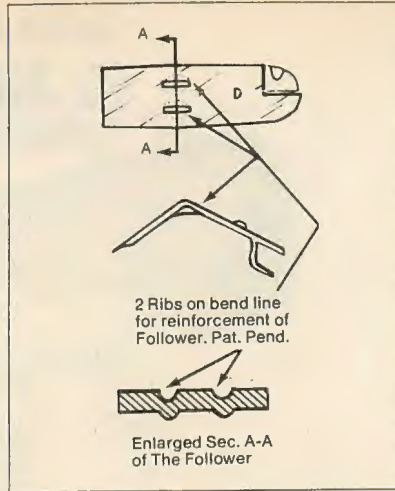
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(black only) ..... \$15.00

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### New Laka stainless steel magazines with improved follower to eliminate malfunctions.

of Defense Training, Inc., Rte. 2, Box 207A, Elroy, WI 53929. John is a professional, and I mean *professional* weapons training specialist whom I can recommend to interested police departments without hesitation.

John was demonstrating various weapons techniques, utilizing the computer-controlled Duel-a-tron target system, and mentioned to me that, as far as he was aware, no one had ever shot the course with a SMG, and that everyone present was of the opinion that the SMG could not be effectively handled on multiple, close-to-medium range targets, particularly under stress.

He then asked me if I'd care to be the subject of an experiment conducted before the 100 or so police and Army officials present by shooting the Duel-a-tron, with the SMG of my choice. I consented, and was able to max the course three different times, with my M1 Thompson, a Smith & Wesson M76, and Sid McQueen's superb No. 3 prototype Sidewinder SMG.

There were eight targets, at a variety of ranges and angles with the added hazard of being two-sided, i.e., each had a "good-guy," on one side, and a "Felon" on the other. The participant had to identify each of the targets and make a judgement decision as to whether or not he should engage the target(s). The kicker here is that each target or multiple targets *only stay exposed for two seconds!* In this time frame, the shooter must identify and decide to engage the target(s) and if so, place effective fire on it/them. I can vouch for the stress factor!

The fact that, with three different SMGs, I was able to "clean" the course, illustrates what proponents of the SMG have been trying to show us for 50 years . . . that the SMG, in the hands of even a semi-skilled operator can and is an effective weapon for the mission for which it was designed: **close combat with multiple targets where time is critical.**

At this point, proponents of the shotgun will be thinking that they could have done the same thing, using the multiple projectile feature of the shotgun as a basis for comparison. I must state that I do not think so, because of the critical time frames involved. Time and time again, targets became exposed while I was in the process of shooting a target. This means that the target must be identified and engaged in so short a period of time that even the most rudimentary aiming is out of the question. Such aiming *is* required with a shotgun to obtain a solid pattern on the target, whereas it is not with the SMG.

One merely has to fire his burst and correct, even while the burst is in process, by watching the strike of his bullets down-range. I was able to repeatedly correct and bring fire onto the "K-zones" of the Duel-a-tron targets without ceasing fire and initiating another, corrected burst of fire. One cannot accomplish this with a shotgun in the same period of time, and make no mistake, I'm talking about milliseconds, just like in combat!

So, the next time someone attempts to tell you that a shotgun will do anything that a SMG will do, invite him to prove his point on the Duel-a-tron with his favorite shotgun and load! He'll be damned surprised, I'll guarantee you, and so will those watching the fracas!

### NEW 40-rd. magazine now available for M16/AR15/AR18-180

Sterling Arms, Ltd., under license from Armalite, is manufacturing an all-steel 40-rd. magazine that will fit and function properly in the M16, AR15, and Armalite AR18/180 series of rifles interchangeably without modification.

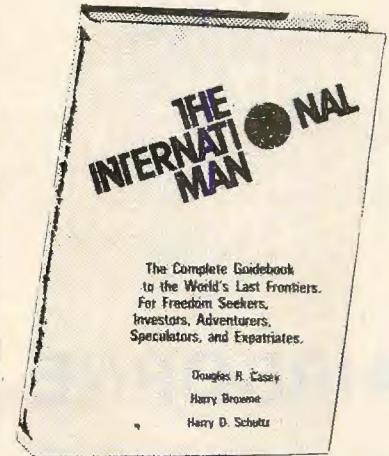
The quality of the item is excellent, and the test samples all exhibited excellent finish and performance, with no malfunction experienced.

The only problem here, is that the size of the magazine precludes it from fitting in any existing ammo pouch! So, the question here is: "What do you do with it after you fire it and dump it from the gun? How do I carry loaded 40-rd. mags?" It's a good question . . . but I have no answer because I don't know of any pouch which this mag will fit into.

Perhaps someone will market a suitable magazine pouch for this item, but until this occurs, I will stay with only one of these mags, in my weapon, for vehicular or airborne use, to be dumped and abandoned when it is empty. I will then continue to fire, using the standard 20 or 30-rd mags, which are carried in conventional military type pouches on my web gear.



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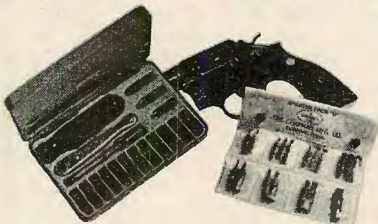
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# TERRAINE & SITUATION - NO. 9

BY JERRY AHERN

Flat silhouette belt holsters are the current rage in concealment for off-duty revolvers or semi-automatics. Virtually every major and minor leather manufacturer offers one or more of this type holster for all popular guns, some low ranging to the .25 autos and some made to accommodate the long-tubed single action field guns. There are several variations, however, on the major theme in these types of holsters and several fine points to be looked for in a truly serviceable, long-duty-life, secure holster. One holster which seems to provide all the assets of the flat silhouette concept and none of the liabilities is the Safariland 28 series.

Taking it step by step, let's examine the problems possible with flat silhouette belt holsters and see where the Safariland number does away with them.

In the first place, the most obvious problem is the way the holster is slung on the belt to begin with. There are two ways. Many holsters utilize belt slots and these are definitely more convenient when putting the holster on and taking it off. The Safariland and other holsters utilize double tunnel loops. This offers two important advantages. First, to the person interested in maximizing on concealability, the tunnel loops present a flatter line to the holster, making it blend into the belt more evenly. But, more important, the tunnel loops do not allow the holster, after some wearing, to buckle and sag away from the belt—making that flat silhouette no longer very flat at all.

Another problem with flat silhouette holsters is the positioning of the center of mass of the gun. If the center of mass is too high over the belt, the butt of the handgun can start hanging out in a gunslinger droop. The Safariland and several other makers' holsters were designed with this taken into consideration. Some are not.

The third major problem is the thumb snap itself—and this is a two-part problem. The thumb snap needs stiffening with metal or plastic or at the very least the use of added leather as reinforcement. Without reinforcement, the thumb snap is not really as positive, either for always reliable drawing or for durability. And if the thumbsnap is left exposed, one or both parts can scratch the gun finish and make a good deal of noise when the gun is withdrawn. The Safariland holster and others have met one or both of these problems.

The Safariland 28 series, however, has double tunnel loops, pitches the center of gravity at just the right spot, has a reinforced thumb snap and, better than any other holster of the type which I have examined, guards the gun against the thumb snap. The female portion of the snap is surrounded by a rubberized plastic guard and the male portion is backed with a rubberized plastic shield. In lined holsters, the lining is over this to boot.

In short, the Safariland 28 series is the only holster I have examined—and I have examined virtually all examples of the major makers—which combines all these attributes in a product which is not only functional but attractive as well. I have been fooling with a sample of the 28 series for my Browning High Power and intend to plunk out the cash for it. It is the first belt holster I have seen which does the job the way it should be all the way. For more information write Safariland Leather Products, 1941 Walker Ave., Monrovia, Calif. 91016.

\* \* \* \* \*

Boot knives are gaining in popularity daily, and with all the laws about guns coupled with rising street crime, for many folks, a stout slab of steel seems to be the way to go, at least for a backup to a gun. One of the smallest and most useful of the boot knives around is the A.G. Russell "Sting." Some time ago, a reader dropped me a line asking me to get hold of one of these and report on it here. I had been planning to but just hadn't gotten around to it. The reader had a Sting and liked and favored it over the Gerber MkI.

As is obvious from my writings, here and elsewhere, I like Gerber knives—don't have stock in the company, I just appreciate quality when I see it. However, I also see quality in the little Sting from A.G. Russell. Rather than seeing the knives as rivals, I see them more as companions or alternates. The Gerber MkI is a formidable looking instrument—not quite so formidable as the early Gerber MkII I have, minus the sawteeth and with the thinner blade, but formidable nonetheless. The Sting doesn't really look that hairy, but for its purpose is somewhat more suited in size to the job.

The Sting is on the small side for a boot knife. Of one-piece construction, it is strong in the extreme. Crafted in stain-

less steel at about the same price as the Gerber MkI in tool steel, it is a bargain, well under \$40. But, in reality, the Sting is more of a sleeve knife than a boot knife, less for fighting than stabbing. Flat and more concealable than the Gerber, even the sheath is a sleeve-knife type, the knife held in the leather by the tight fit, surrounding and partially engulfing the handle pieces. Take off the nickel plated belt clip and fit it to a wrist band, and a fine sleeve knife you have indeed.

Therein lies the big difference. The Sting is definitely the more suited of the knives for clandestine carry and superbly made and reliable. The Gerber, on the other hand, less concealable, would be more help in a prolonged fight. So, friend reader, there is my evaluation. For hideout use and most street situations I can envision, the Sting may well be the better choice because of its size. For use as a weapon over a prolonged period, the Gerber is probably better. Both makers are known for their fine quality, and the basic knives are comparable in price. If I wanted the most concealable fixed-blade knife I could find to rely on—from commercial sources, the Sting would definitely be it. My reader has good taste in knives. For more information on the Sting, contact A.G. Russell, 1705 Highway 71 North, Springdale, Arkansas 72764.

\* \* \* \* \*

Getting hold of a Smith & Wesson Model 19 .357 Combat Magnum often times takes some doing. One of the most popular police revolvers and definitely one of the best, it is snatched up as soon as it hits the dealers' shelves, often times spoken for weeks, sometimes months before. And a good Smith & Wesson revolver is worth the wait. But for those who can't wait or who don't necessarily have to have a Smith, but will settle for something nearly or equally as good, there is a close mate to the 19—the Llama Comanche, imported into the U.S. by Stoeger Industries.

The Llama has a fully adjustable rear sight like the 19, oversize target stocks like the gun, and best yet is far more readily available. A K-frame-sized gun, weight and overall size are nearly identical. The excellent Pachmayr grips for the Smith & Wessons will also fit the Llama. Made by Gabilondo y Cia in Spain, the gun is like so many Spanish firearms, a near copy with interesting and worthwhile innovations of its own. And innovative is what you must call the low, integral vent rib, matte finish which leads to an easy-to-pick-up ramp front sight.

Trigger pull on our Llama Comanche III, as it is called, was a super nice 4¼-pounds single action, while the DA pull is very slick and clean. At 25 yards, groups averaged under two inches nearly dead on at point of aim from a two-hand unsupported position, firing double action.

Such hot .38 Special loads as Federal's 158 JSP and 125 JHP were used. A lot of fire came out of the muzzle with these, but accuracy didn't suffer.

In short, if in your judgement, the quality of the gun is equal to the name it carries, the Llama should be given virtually equal consideration with the Smith & Wesson Model 19. Performance of our sample was astoundingly good. For more information, contact Stoeger Industries, 55 Ruta Court, South Hackensack, N.J. 07606.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ayn Rand, the author of such marvelous works as *Atlas Shrugged*, one of the finest and most provocative works in the English language, is someone singularly gifted at writing future history. Those familiar with the work know what I mean. For those who are not, it outlines the collapse of world society under thinly disguised socialism, the unconscious socialism of welfare, subsidies, excess regulation and killing taxation, where the productive of the world finally decide to stop giving the rest of the population, the government included, a free ride on their effort. I spoke of future history. And it is that. Alarmingly.

Society has gotten to the point where the producers must suffer for being able and the non-producers be rewarded for their inability and inaction. This is heresy to logic and the ultimate immorality.

The future of free enterprise is at the critical stage, as is the future of free thought. Over the next several decades—perhaps less time than that—official and unofficial national policies will either blot out humanity's natural laws through government regulations and controls or begin to turn society back towards rewarding individual effort and ability. To wax pessimistic, it seems only too probable that hard-won power will not be relinquished easily, that every effort will be bent to vanquish those who will not conform, that future history will someday become past tragedy.



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**Dan Predovich**



Last issue I reviewed the customized .45 Colt auto crafted by Austin Behlert of Union, New Jersey. This piece was sent to me accompanied by a field holster built by Ranger Leather Products, Inc.

The Ranger holster is a well designed and an equally well executed piece of equipment. The holster is designed for security, having a protective half-flap snapped over the hammer and rear sight of the holstered .45 auto. The thumb snap release is positive and quick. This holster is one of the few of its kind that allows a full grip on the weapon while holstered. This allows the shooter to draw and fire without the need to adjust hand position on the weapon.

The magazine pouch, which holds two magazines, is also protective in design by the clever use of a snap-off magazine cover. The cover, if removed, may be securely resnapped underneath the pouch, leaving the magazines exposed for a quick reload. The exposed magazines are still held securely in the pouch by means of friction fit.

My sample of the Ranger gear is dyed in a camouflage motif and sports an attractive rubbed wax finish. I understand that black and natural finishes are also available. Quality materials are used throughout and the stitching, edgework, and fit demonstrate professional craftsmanship.

For information on the full line of Ranger leather gear, write to Ranger Leather Products, Inc., P.O. Box 3198, East Camden, Arkansas 71701.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have received more than a dozen letters asking for the source of the book *Officer Down . . . Code Three* by Pierce Brooks. Evidently many bookstores show no listing for this publication. The publisher, Motorola Teleprograms, has advised me that the text may be ordered directly from them by sending \$7.95 (including shipping and handling) to Motorola Teleprograms, 4825 North Scott Street, Suite 26, Schiller Park, Illinois 60176. A training film by the same title is also available through the same source.

\* \* \* \* \*

**VIBRA-TEK CASE TUMBLER**

The Vibra-Tek case polisher is a useful alternative to the traditional case tumbler. The Vibra-Tek, as the name implies,

works on a vibration principle that causes the polishing medium, in this case ground walnut hulls, to rub on the surface of the cartridge cases. The process allows the polishing medium to clean the inside as well as the outside of each case.

The Vibra-Tek is a plastic tub that is mounted on a paddle-shaped metal spring board. This is, in turn, suspended at one end over a wooden base of similar shape. The motor is mounted at one end of the base so that, when turned on, it sends vibrations along the metal spring board to the plastic tub. A second plastic tub fits neatly inside the first. This second tub holds the cartridge cases and ground walnut hulls for easy dumping.

For comparison purposes in this product evaluation, I chose a Lortone tumbler-polisher of traditional style. It is a multi-sided rubber drum that rotates on motorized rollers. I have used this tumbler for several years with excellent results.

The test consisted of comparing the time required by the Vibra-Tek and by the Lortone to obtain sufficiently cleaned and polished cartridge cases. I put 200 .45 ACP brass cases and a sufficient quantity of ground walnut hulls in each polisher and left them overnight (nine hours). On morning inspection, the Vibra-Tek had accomplished an obviously better cleaning job on its cartridge cases.

All is not roses, however. The Vibra-Tek is somewhat loud and unless you sleep soundly or can isolate the polisher from your sleeping quarters, forget overnight use. Another disadvantage is the small capacity (250 .45 ACP cases). If you do not reload in great quantities, this may not bother you.

The Vibra-Tek is available in most gun shops or you may write T.E.S. Inc., 2807 North Prospect Street, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80907.

\* \* \* \* \*

Q: Although I am no great fan of anemic, sub-caliber DA pocket pistols, there is one feature shared by several of them that I would like to see made available on full-sized service autos: When a loaded magazine is inserted in the magazine well, the slide automatically shuts, thus simplifying the reloading operation. I have seen many shooters re-

lease their magazines, rather than their slides, when attempting a reload under pressure.

My own attempts to fabricate a suitable "auto-slide release" for the 1911 A .45 hasn't turned up anything; maybe you can offer suggestions (or one of your readers can).

Also, I had the fortune (misfortune?) of abandoning my four-wheel-drive vehicle in mid-stream when the engine got zapped by water ( you know how depth can be deceiving). The water came in faster than I could get most of my weapons out and within the six hours necessary to get back to civilization most of them were well on their way to rusting.

It was not difficult to imagine how, under a serious survival situation, the ability of one's weapons to stay in a functioning condition would do much to ease the stress involved in staying alive. After all, one's weapons are one's most important tools in such a situation, and the knowledge that they can be called on to function after several dunkings is most reassuring. I'd be interested in seeing a comparison of Armoloy vs. Metallife sometime in print.

J.D. Hall, Gainesville, Fla.

A: *One of the advantages of the semi-auto pistol is that one may keep a round in the chamber (i.e., still ready for action), while replacing an empty magazine with a fresh one. The rule is "never shoot your pistol dry!" I try to avoid gimmicks or gadgets on my weapons. My personal opinion is that the modification you suggest is just something else that can break under adverse conditions.*

*I have had favorable experiences with Armoloy, but no experience at all with Metallife. Stainless steel is the best choice for a "rust-proof" weapon if it is available in the weapon of your choice.*

Q: I was introduced to your article "Combat Pistolcraft" in a friend's copy of *Soldier of Fortune* and will look forward to future issues. I have recently purchased a Colt Government Mark IV .45 auto and am confronted with the lack of practical pistol groups here in Seattle from which to learn the practical use of the .45. I have shot the .45 in the Army and in years past, but frankly, my paper target exposure seems inadequate for potential social work. I have shot in winter pistol leagues (.22 caliber), but wish to know my .45's potential as a home defense weapon. Can you suggest books that would give practice exercises that my

friend and I could pursue? Do you have an address for the custom holster maker, Milt Sparks?

A.B., Seattle, Washington

A: *Probably the best text on practical pistol shooting is Cooper on Handguns, published by Peterson Publishing Company, 8490 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90069. For home defense, the .45 auto is certainly adequate, depending, of course, on your own environmental situation (urban, suburban, rural, etc.). My own preference is a double-barrel shotgun hung above my bedroom door.*

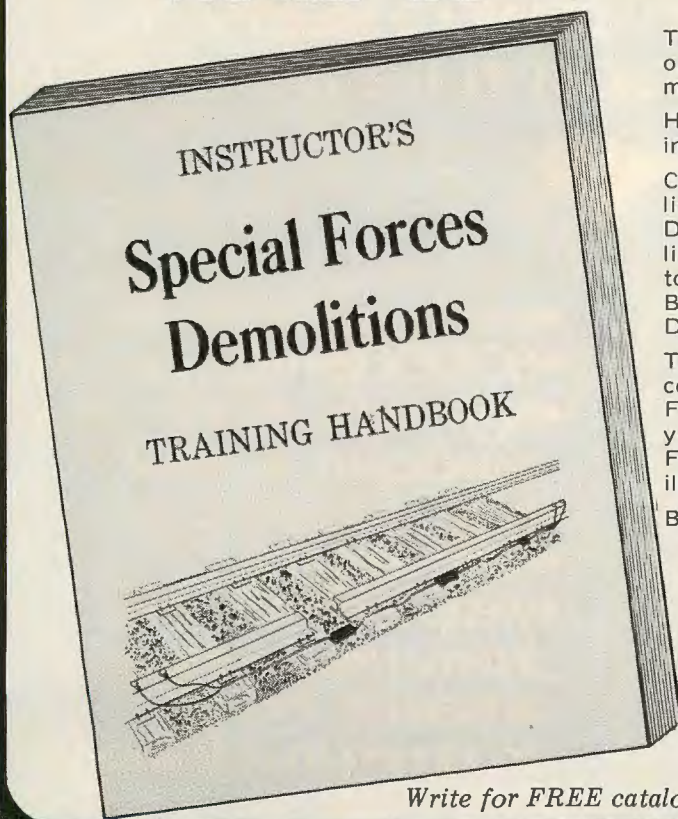
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\* \* \* \* \*

This is the last column of mine to appear in *Soldier of Fortune* magazine. My future writing time will be fully occupied by my obligation to another publication. Thanks for spending your time reading my words. I hope to see you again soon in other pages.



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# 55 DAYS: The Fall of South Vietnam

by Alan Dawson

Review by Edward G. Lansdale, Maj. Gen., USAF Ret.

**55 DAYS: The Fall of South Vietnam**, by Alan Dawson. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 366 pages, \$12.50.

After the last helicopter lifted off the last Marine from the roof of the American Embassy in Saigon on the morning of 30 April 1975, only a handful of Americans remained behind in Vietnam. One of them was Alan Dawson, Saigon bureau chief for UPI, who had served seven years in Vietnam as soldier and journalist. It was his own choice to stay. He hoped to keep the UPI bureau going. His Chinese-Vietnamese wife with their sons had arrived safely in Bangkok. Freed from worry about them and feeling at home among the Vietnamese, he could concentrate on getting the most dramatic story of his generation. And get it he did.

As an aggressive reporter for a wire service, Dawson already had an American journalist's grasp of the events of the past weeks that had brought enemy forces to the edge of Saigon. Now he watched the scene as the enemy arrived and took over. In the next six months before the Communists made him leave

Vietnam, he got the personal stories of many who had been through the final battles, men from both sides of the struggle as well as civilians whose homes and lives had been overrun on the battleground. The final pieces of the story fell into place for him when Radio Hanoi in April and May of 1976 broadcast installments of the book-length report by General Van Tien Dung of his leadership of the final Communist offensive. Filled with anecdotes, Dung's report is surprisingly revealing about the feelings, thoughts, decisions, strategy, and tactics of the Communist command during the last days of the war.

Dawson has put all of this material together to tell the story of the Vietnam War's final campaign in sequence, as it happened and as it looked to those in it. The result is a book that takes a reader into high command sessions and decisions on both sides and then down onto the battleground among those who faced the consequences in combat. Dawson's journalistic style and his coloring of the account from time to time by his

personal feelings towards individuals add impact to the story he tells. Further, unlike too many other books by Westerners, Dawson shows a deep empathy for the Vietnamese. They are not merely cardboard figures with exotic names. They are living people, center stage, with all their human traits showing. A reader can understand them.

The book begins with vignettes of Saigon on that last day, 30 April; the desperation of Vietnamese and Koreans who had thought the Americans would get them out but didn't, the brief spree of looting by gangs from Cholon, the frantic attempts by General Duong Van "Big" Minh to get an accommodation from the enemy, his orders over Radio Saigon at 10:20 a.m. to cease fighting, and his waiting with his Cabinet in the entry hall of Doc Lap Palace when the enemy arrived—in the person of a VC guide, Sister Nguyen Trang Kien, who had shown some North Vietnamese tanks where the Presidential palace was (the victor's appointed emissary for this final act, Major Nguyen Van Thang, who com-

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manded the spearhead into the city, was delayed by brief fighting at the Saigon Zoo and the Prime Minister's office en route, and then stopping to put on a new uniform he had brought along). The last ARVN commander at the General Staff compound near the airport, Brigadier General Nguyen Huu Thang, hugged the conquerors on arrival; he was a long-time Communist sympathizer. Sergeant La Er Tang who had made maps of "enemy order of battle" in Saigon's counterpart of CIA, showed up in the uniform of his true rank, a Captain in the Communist forces. The false information he had put into his maps had helped deceive the Saigon command on the location of Communist main forces. Americans had depended upon the Vietnamese for such details in the final days.

The prelude to the final campaign came at year's end in 1974, when the Communists took Phuoc Long province on the border north of Saigon, piece by piece. It was done with conventional tactics, encirclement of a target area, siege with long-range artillery (including 130mm guns), climaxed with a massive infantry assault. Phuoc Binh, the provincial capital, fell in early January. Saigon's leaders had done little to help their beleaguered forces in Phuoc Long. The White House in Washington, reacting to an outcry when a U.S. Navy task force put to sea from the Philippines, announced that under no circumstances would the U.S. reenter the Vietnam War. (This was on the very day that Phuoc Binh fell.) In Hanoi, Politburo members pushing for a spring offensive drew up successful arguments from the Phuoc Long test. Their new tactics were good. Saigon was showing military flabbiness. The U.S. apparently had really quit the war.

The Politburo agreed to a spring offensive. Two-pronged, the first target area would be South Vietnam's Highlands, followed quickly by a second force's push south across the border into the coastal area. If successful, the Highland's force could then move to the coast, meet up with the coastal force, and thus bite off a big chunk of territory to be held. It was believed that this would make the capture of Saigon possible within two years. Meanwhile, in Saigon, President Thieu had on his desk a contingency plan prepared by the General Staff. In the event of heavy Communist attacks in the future, it would be wise to pull troops from the sparsely settled Highlands in a timely and orderly manner, and regroup them in more defensible positions on the coast and to the south.

The Communists attacked Ban Me Thuot in the Highlands on 10 March, surprising the defenders. Secrecy of movement and deception (by feints elsewhere and by misinformation from infiltrators such as Sergeant La Er Tang) had made the Saigon command believe that the main attacks would be at Pleiku

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DEALER INQUIRIES WELCOMED

and Kontum further north. In two days the Communists had overrun the defenders at Ban Me Thuot. On 15 March, President Thieu ordered the Highlands to be abandoned, shocking his generals. Word spread throughout South Vietnam's military that an acceptable alternative to standing and fighting the enemy was to retreat. On 16 March, troops followed by most of the population of Pleiku and Kontum started heading for the coast on little used Highway 7B in a disorganized convoy of some 100,000 persons. It came under increasingly heavy harassing fire and ambushes from the enemy, as well as blown bridges, lack of food and water, earning the tragic label of being the "Convoy of Tears." It was decimated by 24 March.

Nine days after the attack in the Highlands, the coastal attack began. Tank-led Communist forces overran Quang Tri, the northernmost coastal province, on 19 March. Its defenders, notably the Marines, simply fled before the massed tanks without a real fight; enemy tanks turned on their headlights, seemingly to light the way for the fleeing Marines to reach Route 1, the main road South to Hue. When fleeing troops and refugees arrived in Hue, that city caught the panic. By 22 March, 250,000 had fled Hue, most of them clogging Route 1, heading for Danang. Military units were reformed and put in positions to beef up the defenses already manned by the highly regarded ARVN 1st Division. In Hanoi that same day, First Secretary Le Duan made a long but forceful speech; the Politburo had decided to "go for broke" in South Vietnam.

Communist forces slid around the defenses at Hue and attacked it from north and south on 23 March, with heavy use of artillery and armor as well as infantry. The Marines broke and ran. In the 1st Division defense line, Captain Tran Ba Phuoc, who was acting commander of a battalion in the 1st Regiment, feeling outnumbered and outgunned with his retreat cut off, surrendered his battalion. The Communists promptly exploited this in their propaganda. In Saigon, President Thieu accepted the resignation of his Cabinet and named a "fighting administration."

South of Danang, surprise attacks by Communist forces on 24 March overran Quang Ngai and Tam Ky, cutting South Vietnam in two. The following day, Saigon ordered Hue abandoned; Communist forces moved in within hours. More than 300,000 refugees were now in Danang, where panic began to spread; by 27 March, panic conditions brought a halt to the regular air evacuation of refugees. On 27 March, also, Ambassador Graham Martin returned to Saigon from a rest leave at home. With him was General Frederick Weyand, come to assess the situation for the White House. The same day, Nguyen Cao Ky publicly called for President Thieu's ouster.

Danang was abandoned on 29 March, with an unauthorized last flight out by World Airways volunteers; the author's friend, Paul Vogle of UPI, was aboard. By night, Communist guerrillas were in the city. On 30 March, General Weyand announced that he was "heartened" by ARVN's performance. On 31 March, 10 American families left Saigon. The real air evacuation of Americans didn't begin until 5 April, when a way was found around the Embassy's hesitancy; the Americans went out as "escorts" for flights of Vietnamese orphans.

The "falling dominoes" pattern of giving up defenses continued in April at about the pace of march by the Communists. Nha Trang, Camranh Bay, and Dalat were abandoned. However, on 9 April, when Communist forces hit Phan Rang on Route 1 south of Danang, there was a surprise. President Thieu had hastily sent his old comrade, Lt. General Nguyen Vinh Nghi, to Phan Rang to command the defense. It was Thieu's home town. Until now, Nghi had been noted chiefly for being one of the most corrupt of the Saigon generals. At Phan Rang, he became a tiger, firmly gaining control of panic-stricken troops fleeing into town from the north, reorganizing them, and then putting up a stiff resistance to heavy Communist attacks. Nghi's forces held back the North Vietnamese in hard fighting until 16 April, when Phan Rang fell. On that last day, Marine Private Duc (whose personal story runs throughout the book from the first tank attack at Quang Tri) joined comrades in bulldozing the family tombs of President Thieu, as a last bitter salute to a leader they had come to hate.

The day the battle for Phan Rang opened, 9 April, a North Vietnamese division made a surprise attack on Xuan Loc, about 30 miles northeast of Saigon on Route 1, opening with a massive artillery barrage. One regiment of the 18th Division defended the town. Grudgingly, they gave up part of the town in savage infantry fighting, then counter-attacked, driving the Communists out of town by nightfall. At first light the next morning, Brigadier General Le Minh Dao, the 18th Division's commander, moved a second regiment into the fight. The last really major battle of the campaign had begun.

Saigon was shaken on 15 April as the main ammo dump at close-by Bien Hoa blew up; Communist artillery fire grounded aircraft at this major air base. In the next two days, Americans in Saigon unofficially started to bypass Ambassador Martin's orders and speeded up the air evacuation of "nonessential personnel." On 17 April the U.S. Embassy started burning its papers. Moderate Catholics, Saigon legislators, retired generals, Buddhists, almost anyone with a voice in South Vietnam were clamoring for President Thieu to resign. A U.S. Embassy spokesman denied that a U.S. evacuation was under way. Finally on

21 April, Thieu resigned with a bitter anti-American speech and ailing, elderly Tran Van Huong was sworn in as President. Adding to the gloom that day, Xuan Loc fell.

The Xuan Loc battle had been savage. If other troops had fought as hard as those in the 18th Division did, the Communists would still have been far to the north. The 18th took some of the heaviest artillery fire ever seen in Vietnam and still pushed back three massive tank-led infantry attacks. Saigon tried to help. An elite paratrooper brigade was airlifted to a rubber plantation close by Xuan Loc, only to have the brigade decimated in a huge ambush by a newly arrived North Vietnamese division. The North Vietnamese pushed back the second regiment of the 18th Division. General Dao and the one remaining regiment fought on in town, holding off four North Vietnamese divisions.

By mid-morning of 20 April, the situation in town had become hopeless; the 18th was cut off, with no hope of relief. General Dao ordered four of his remaining six battalions to make their way out, edging between the town and the rubber plantation where remnants of the paratroopers still fought on. Dao went out with the fourth battalion. Colonel Le Xuan Hieu remained behind with the last two battalions to cover the escape. When the Communists closed the gap between plantation and town, the two battalions drew back into town and dug in for the end. About 600 men with no hope of victory fought a combined tank, artillery, and infantry force of about 10,000 North Vietnamese. The next day, the North Vietnamese took the town.

At long last, the U.S. evacuation was officially underway. On 23 April, 26 planeloads of evacuees left for the U.S.; 28 loads went the next day. Saigon politicians now were pressuring President Huong to resign. The Communists had refused to talk with Huong. In Saigon, it was felt that the last chance to negotiate with the Communists lay with a "Third Force" figure who had long favored a negotiated peace, the man who had led the coup against President Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963, General Duong Van "Big" Minh. "Big" Minh was sworn into office on 28 April, only to discover that the Communists didn't want to talk with him, either. Why negotiate with victory at hand? Now rockets were hitting Saigon. The airport was under artillery fire.

On 29 April, Ambassador Martin ordered the final U.S. evacuation, to end at midnight. Shortly after midnight, in the first minutes of 30 April, Martin climbed into a helicopter and took off. About 600 persons in the Embassy compound still awaiting evacuation were abandoned, along with other groups all around town who had been promised a flight out. A little later that morning, Communist forces entered Saigon.

That's the story told in the rich details of this book.

President in Exile of Cambodia

# Lon Nol Reflects

Interview by Thomas D. Reisinger



The tranquility of Hawaii in 1978 contrasts sharply to the chaos of Cambodia in 1975 when the remnants of the Lon Nol government, aided by American non-assistance, was plummeted into agony.

Little more than memories and frustration remain for Marshal President Lon Nol, the man who was condemned by some, adored by some, and unknown to many, particularly from the West.

Prior to a recent trip to Thailand, I was invited to stop off in Hawaii to meet the General at his home outside of Honolulu. Before my arrival, I wondered what my impression would be of the man who had deposed Prince Sihanouk and had presided over the death throes of a nation which had been abandoned by the United States after having cast its lot with us.

What about the charges of corruption levelled against Lon Nol by his enemies, both political and military, and the accusations that he escaped from Cambodia with millions of dollars worth of gold bullion?

These questions hammered at me but I was determined to remain as objective as possible and to rely on my personal impressions of the man, his statements, and my later experiences in Thailand before reaching any firm conclusions.

After I telephoned the General's residence and made an appointment to see him, a taxi took me the remaining miles to his comfortable but unpretentious home. Upon my arrival, I was immediately ushered into his presence by one of his sons.

The 65-year-old exile President of Cambodia, although partially incapacitated by a stroke several years ago, nevertheless rose to his feet and greeted me with a cordiality that I had not quite expected.

After the exchange of pleasantries, we settled down to an interview which, hopefully, reveals a side of the man not commonly known either to his supporters or detractors.

**SOF:** Mr. President, what are your general impressions of your present life in the United States?

**Lon Nol:** While the United States has treated me well and I enjoy Hawaii, my thoughts are several thousand miles away with my people, both the refugees in Thailand and in other countries and those Cambodians who are still suffering in Cambodia. While they are in pain it is not possible for me to be content with my new life here.

**SOF:** Going back to 1975, what were your feelings when you finally realized that there was no hope of additional American assistance?

**Lon Nol:** I had been previously asked to resign or abdicate my position, which I did, because I still held some hope that the United States would rescue the people of Cambodia from the turmoil and

brutality that I and others knew would come. Had I been asked to resign much earlier and had received a guarantee of more U.S. aid, I would have gladly done so.

**IF** we would have just been offered 10 tanks or anything we could have used against the Khmer Rouge, the safety of my country would have taken priority over my own desires to remain in power. I was greatly disappointed that my own government asked me to leave, but I agreed to do so with conditions today published in the White Document, since I still had some hope that the Americans would give us the help we needed, or that we could continue fighting ourselves or with other friends' assistance in South-east Asia.

**SOF:** Do you feel bitterness toward the United States?

**Lon Nol:** I feel no bitterness, only a great amount of disappointment that my people were not spared the horror of genocide, disease, and concentration camps by U.S. diplomatic action with help from the UN's Security Council, since Cambodia, a UN member, had been invaded by North Vietnam in 1970. I cannot understand why the Americans were so blind as to believe that no reprisals would take place after the communists gained power.

**SOF:** After you left Cambodia for the last time, where were you given sanctuary?

**Lon Nol:** I went to Thailand first, then to Indonesia, Bali, and, finally, to the United States. Most of my family accompanied me in normal fashion except for one of my daughters and her husband who remained at Phnom Penh to continue working at their jobs. Since they were not able to escape, their fate was death.

**SOF:** Many estimates have been made regarding the total number of deaths since the Khmer Rouge takeover. What do you believe to be an accurate figure?

**Lon Nol:** From information that I have received, I believe that approximately 2½ million people have died in Cambodia since the fall of my country. The mass executions have taken their toll but disease and forced labor have contributed to the total also.

We knew there would be reprisals against the military personnel and their families but the brutality that was directed against the monks and the civilian population was not totally expected. When babies are bayoneted to death, when young boys and girls are burned to death or when old men and women are buried alive there is no basic human feeling in the Khmer Rouge forces—only hate.

**SOF:** What is the overall general condition of the Cambodian refugees in Thailand?

**Lon Nol:** Except for the overcrowding in some of the camps, the situation is fairly good. The government of Thailand

has been extremely generous to us and has provided us with refuge in our time of need. I wish to express my gratitude to them and also to the many international organizations that have given us aid.

**SOF:** What are your feelings about the conflict between Vietnam and Democratic Kampuchea [Cambodia]?

**Lon Nol:** While the Vietnamese may be more humane than the Khmer Rouge, they are still communists. So, it is of little consequence who is the victor. The Vietnamese have designs of conquest on all of Southeast Asia so if they are successful in taking all of Cambodia this will add fuel to their territorial ambitions. The answer is to retake Cambodia and to put into power a government that is democratic in nature and humane in attitude. People cannot be governed by brutality.

**SOF:** Is there a significant resistance movement inside Cambodia at this time?

**Lon Nol:** There are several such movements operating inside Cambodia. They have been successful in liberating several forced labor camps and freeing those who were captives there. Some of the groups are independent with little relationship to the others, while several are unified in their goals and cooperate extensively.

With adequate funding the groups could become a very strong force and could possibly liberate province after province with the result being the freedom for thousands of Cambodians who have been under the communist yoke for three years.

The Thai Government cannot and is not giving any support to these groups, so they are self-sufficient in every phase of their operations. If outside support could be obtained, a good amount of success could be realized in not too long a period of time.

Thousands of Cambodians want to fight. But they cannot if they do not have the equipment with which to do so. Those who claim to be strong anti-communists, nations and individual people, will hopefully offer financial support. If they do, the battle to regain our homeland can begin in earnest.

**SOF:** Besides financial assistance, what is needed by the resistance groups?

**Lon Nol:** Medical supplies for those men and women who are wounded and for those who are sick. Malaria is a constant problem and steals the strength of those who need to fight. Of course, weapons are needed and also food and clothing. But if enough money can be obtained, these things can be bought from friendly sources. So, money is the major item that is required.

**SOF:** What do you recommend as ways to help the refugees in Thailand?

**Lon Nol:** While the Thai government may be successful in eventually resettling some of the people, it cannot be expected to take care of more than 100,000 people from three different nations [Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos]. So, I hope that

countries such as the United States will see fit to admit more refugees.

I understand that the U.S. is now giving priority to "boat people" from Vietnam. While I believe that all people should have an opportunity for relocation to the United States, I hope that the U.S. government will open its doors to a greater number of Cambodians and Laotians. Many times the people from Cambodia have risked greater dangers in their escapes than have those from Vietnam. I hope sponsors will become available in the U.S. for a greater number of refugees and that people will write to their officials and request government approval for the admittance of a greater number, especially women with children and elderly men and women. If the conflict between Thailand and Cambodia worsens, thousands of refugees will be in danger. So, it is most important that the people be removed from some of the camps as soon as possible. Only in this way can their welfare be insured.

**SOF:** Why, in your opinion, did the world press ignore the massive slaughter in Cambodia for at least a year?

**Lon Nol:** Many news services and newspapers are pro-left in their political views. I believe they either could not believe the reports of such massive human slaughter or they sought to protect the communist criminals from unfavorable world opinion. Even now, no great outcry has come from the United States, European nations, or The United Nations. This could quite possibly be due to pro-communist sympathies or simple lethargy on the parts of the leadership. It is unfortunate that the blood of so many innocents has been spilled without even verbal homage.

**SOF:** Looking back on the last several years, are there any things you would have done differently if you had had the opportunity?

**Lon Nol:** I believe that I would have dealt more swiftly and surely with the corruption that was present in my government. In this way, I could have won more support among the people, especially those in rural areas of my country. Also, I would have trusted the United States less than I did and would have taken more aggressive action against the communist insurgents.

It is difficult to say whether these methods would have made a difference in the final outcome. But it is hard to imagine anything worse than the ashes and tears that now cover my country. My prayers are for those who have died and who will die unless my homeland is freed.



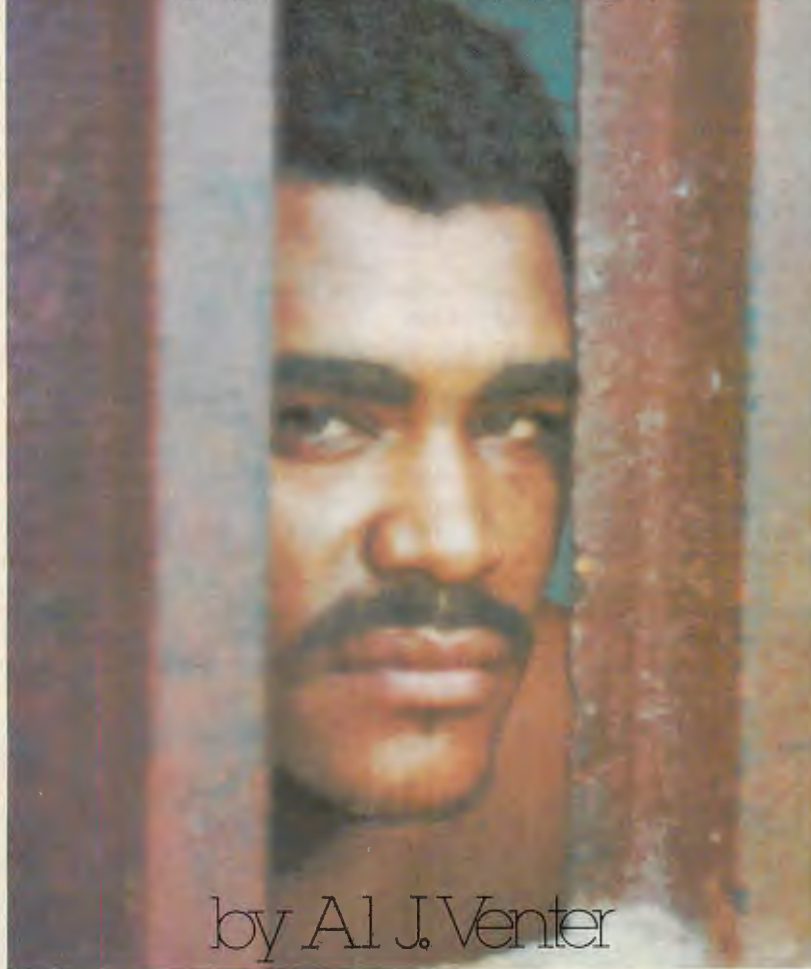
Angola has seen many myths shattered. The long propounded "invincibility" of the South African Army, for instance, did not exactly emerge from the campaign unscathed, even though comparatively few infantry were involved in actual hostilities and air force and mechanized units never entered the picture. Much of the actual fighting was left to specialist units such as the Parabats, No. 1 Reconnaissance Commando and armored car, SSB detachments.

South Africa's withdrawal, as a result, has been grossly misrepresented. Once the order had come from Cape Town to pull back, this was accomplished in stages. When contact was made with the enemy, South African units would move further south and take up new positions, repeating the procedure once the combined Cuban-MPLA force reached them, and so it went on until the South West African border was reached. And let there be no mistake, the Cubans and their allies took heavy casualties during this period.

These moves, although hurried and usually passed on at the last moment, were orderly and systematic, even though, it is said, incredible quantities of ammunition were destroyed by the evacuating force. One report, which I have been unable to substantiate, indicates that in a single withdrawal the South Africans detonated as much as 40 tons of 9mm ammunition, which was probably one reason why locally-made pistol ammunition was in such short supply in South Africa for much of 1976.

Conversely, heroes emerged where there should have been none. If one is to judge by the way Cuban regulars strutted through the streets of Luanda after the South Africans had finally pulled back, one could only have gained the impression that each one of them had personally helped oust the "hated racists" as the Springboks were so often termed on Radio Luanda. Speak to them, even two years after the event, and just about

# Angola - Castro's Vietnam



by Al J. Venter

every one that was involved in the southern campaign against the Republic's forces claims that he had killed "a couple of South Africans." Considering that less than 30 South Africans were actually killed in action, over a period of several months (some of these as a result of contact with landmines), and the claim wears thin because there were an estimated 6000-8000 Cubans deployed on the southern front.

Bravado behind the lines is fine. In the line of fire, if Western military standards are applied, the average Cuban fared dismally.

While many Cubans who fought in Angola, broadly speaking, produced better results than their Portuguese conscript counterparts before them, the majority, with a few exceptions, were lightweights in the realm of military exploits. As snipers, some of them were

excellent shots. Technically, as a result of Soviet training, they were more than adequate when it came to handling sophisticated Russian artillery, but even here they lacked a certain fortitude to take as much punishment as they meted out. Once the South African gunners had found their range, there were occasions when Cuban units dropped everything and ran.

Still, Dr. Fidel Castro, the Cuban leader, has unquestioningly earned the heartfelt gratitude of many black states for taking the initiative and allowing his forces to enter the Angolan fray, even though the gesture was the result of Soviet pressure.

He justified this decision to his Party Congress in Havana during 1976 on two grounds: the first, "to prevent the invasion of Angola by South Africa," and secondly, "as a moral duty." In revolutionary terms, his logic makes good sense, which is one of the reasons why Cuba remains the toast of Africa north of the Zambesi. Castro has had the satisfaction of winning for his nation a central position upon the world stage

and has seen Cuba's prestige in the Third World enormously increased.

At the same time, Cuba has achieved little materially from her Angolan adventure. The thaw in relations with the United States, which seemed to be going well during 1975, has been sharply reversed and the suspicions of Cuba's Latin American neighbors, which had begun to lose their exaggerated fear of the Caribbean Republic, have been aroused to fresh agitation. There is also the number of Cubans killed in Angola; without doubt nowhere near the 1500 dead claimed by Molica, the Cabindan secessionist movements, but substantial, nevertheless, for a nation with a population not much bigger than that of Portugal. The regular Cuban Army is estimated to total about 90,000 with another 90,000 men in reserve.

The continued presence of Cuban *dragomans* in Angola has given the Luanda regime a much-needed breathing space in which to rebuild its political and administrative apparatus and refloat the economy, free from otherwise imperative distractions of a security nature and running the government on a hand-to-mouth basis. With Dr. Agostinho Neto's government threatened from both the Right and the Left, Cuban forces in attendance is comforting. The decision of the MPLA Government to open a military academy, to establish training centers for skilled workers, to restructure the school year: none of these reforms would have been possible without the political moratorium created by Castro's agents.

Paradoxically, therefore, the presence of Cubans in Angola is seen by some as a guarantee of security and stability. Even the American-owned Gulf Oil Company which has been reactivating its off-shore oil installations in Cabinda has reason to be thankful for the *Pax Cubana*, as it is phrased locally. Cuban experts have replaced many of the Portuguese who fled Angola before independence.

A more disconcerting note is sounded by reports that the Cuban secret police, the *Direccion General de Inteligencia* (DGI) have played an important role in setting up an Angolan-style security force

**MPLA troops, trained by Cubans, pass in review. Most can't fight any better than they can march.**

modelled on the Soviet KGB. One hard piece of evidence in this regard is that Igor Ivanovich Uvarov, a *Tass* "correspondent" who has been active in the Angolan capital and who is also a leading member of the Soviet Military Intelligence, has been instrumental in this direction.

Despite the recent attention of the world's Press, Cuban assistance to Africa is nothing new. Early contacts were set up shortly after Castro achieved power in Cuba when Guido Sanchez, a Cuban diplomat in London, first arrived in Nkrumah's Ghana to make contact with some of the anti-Portuguese revolutionaries there. It was probably then that South Africa first entered the picture, for *Osagyefo* Nkrumah was obsessed at overthrowing the Pretoria regime by force.

The Cuban "revolutionary connection" is explained by Castro's and the late Che Guevara's early interest in promoting revolution in Latin America.

More than a decade ago, Guevara went to Africa in search of revolution. He spent three months in Algiers in 1965, where he consolidated ties with the Portuguese exiles, and he later fought for a while in the Congo with left-wing terrorists in their attempt to topple President Mobutu's regime. Che soon returned to the Caribbean, "completely disillusioned with revolutionary prospects in Africa," he told one of his aides. Meanwhile the Cuban government has

continued to maintain a foothold on the continent.

For much of this time Havana was particularly interested in the former insurgency leader in Portuguese Guinea (now Guine-Bissau), the late Amilcar Cabral who was assassinated by one of his own men. While Cabral's theories on guerrilla warfare differed from Guevara's, the two men kept in close contact and eventually Cuban "commandos" were sent to fight alongside PAIGC forces in the steamy tropical enclave on the northwest coast of Africa.

At the time of the Lisbon *coup d'etat* there were approximately 200 Cuban "military advisors" with the PAIGC movement. One of these men, Rodrigues Miralta, was recently promoted to the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party.

Aid was also provided to Agostinho Neto's MPLA through offices in what was then known as Congo Brazzaville; one of the main MPLA staging camps at Dolisie was manned by Cubans.

In the rest of Africa, Cubans have been equally active. There are still Cubans in Guine-Bissau. Cuban agents have also been reported to be closely connected to Libya's revolutionary leader Moamar al Gaddafi and linked with his protege "Carlos" Ramirez Sanchez, code name "The Jackal." Early 1976, Soviet transports ferried almost 1000 Cuban troops, pilots and technicians into the giant Russian military complex at Berbera





**“Russian ‘Stalin’s Organ,’ such as one pictured above, provide Cuban/MPLA troops with massive shock power.**

Somalia, a major Soviet base on the western flank of the Indian Ocean.

After the Somalians threw out the Russians, the USSR allied itself with the Marxist regime in Ethiopia. After inserting over 15,000 Cuban troops and a billion dollars worth of weapons and equipment, the Somalians were driven out of Ethiopia. *(As we go to press the Cuban expeditionary force is preparing to assist the Ethiopians in liquidating the Eritrean guerrilla movement in Northern Ethiopia. Many observers believe that the next objective of Castro’s ‘Foreign Legion’ may well be Rhodesia. —Eds.)*

More recent reports talk about the entry of “several hundred” Cubans into Mozambique. What their role will be, no one is prepared to say at this stage; obviously, they will be used in some “revolutionary” context at some stage or another, no doubt against the Rhodesians.

The Soviet influence in most things that Cubans abroad do is always manifest, and to those who know the man Castro, this development is surprising. He is totally under Soviet domination which is uncharacteristic for a man who led his ragged army to fight a war of liberation against “oppression and injustice.”

To understand the nature of the Moscow-Havana relationship, it is

essential to examine its evolution over the past decade.

In 1967, Castro sustained a desolate defeat of his grand strategy of violent revolution when Che Guevara failed in Bolivia to show that Cuba could create “Many Vietnams” within South America.

Castro’s incendiarism was so counter-productive, and his own economic mess such a mounting 450-million dollar-a-year burden to the Russians, that they decided to tether him. Oil deliveries to Cuba began mysteriously to fall behind. Sugar mills, factories, highway traffic ground to a halt.

“Sorry, we have trouble on the docks in Baku,” Moscow explained. By mid-1968, Castro capitulated. He placed the DGI under a Soviet KGB general, who sits in an office next to the DGI chief in Havana. The general and his KGB subordinates approve the operational plans of all DGI divisions. Other KGB officers, sons of Spanish communists who fled to the Soviet Union after the Spanish Civil War, have become “Cubans” in the DGI.

The Soviets also imposed a “de-Fidelization” of the Cuban government and economy. Today, 7000 Russians sit in Cuban ministries and enterprises. The Cuban Communist Party has been remade in the Soviet image with a constitution modelled on the Soviet Union’s 1936 Stalinist charter.

Castro’s total surrender was revealed at the 1975 conference in Havana of 24 Latin American Communist Parties. Henceforth, the Castroists announced, all

Cuban help would be given only through the Moscow-approved parties.

“Revolutionaries must discipline themselves, abandon freelance activity, form a united front and resort to violence only under tutelage of the local Kremlin subsidiary,” it was declared at the time.

Soviet control of the Cuban operations is virtually complete. In Cuba itself, Czech and Soviet instructors assist Castro’s terrorists. Cuban experts joined the Palestinian training camps in Syria, tutoring terrorists from Japan, Germany, and Iran as well as Arabs. The graduates depart to wreak global havoc.

In the present phase, Cuban intervention in Angola was initially clandestine. The first mention of it to the Cuban people was made at the end of January, 1976, almost a year after the first entry.

The Cubans insist that they were not in any way involved in the war before “the South African invasion of 23 October 1975.” However, there is much evidence to the contrary. One of the Cubans taken prisoner by the FNLA early in the war admitted that his unit had arrived in Brazzaville in August 1975, and that advance units were already serving militarily in Angola, having been sent to the front before he was.

According to Colin Legum<sup>2</sup> who handles the Cuban issue sympathetically, there is little doubt that Cubans were first brought to Brazzaville before July, 1975, and it is feasible therefore, that Cuban combat troops were later drafted in batches to Angola—their numbers





increasing dramatically from the first unofficial United States Intelligence estimates of 1,500 to 3,000 in the first week of February 1976.

Legum makes the point that the mobilization and transport of such large numbers of troops both by air and by sea, would require at least six weeks, so it is reasonable to assume that the Moscow-Havana agreement dates from at least May 1975.

"The evidence of the Cubans having spearheaded the fighting of the MPLA troops is overwhelming; this is hardly surprising in view of the sophisticated weapons that were used and which few MPLA troops had been trained to handle," says Legum. Making allowances for the Havana focus of the struggle in Angola, there is considerable justification for Castro's claim that "if it had not been for Cuba's assistance, South Africa would have swallowed up Angola."

More salient is the fact that while it was the Cubans who did the actual groundwork, the entire operation involving Cuba was launched at the command of the Soviet Union, "without a single Russian soldier being involved." This is a regular theme in Soviet disclaimers about their actual role in Angola,

Russian T-55 tanks on parade. T-55 carries 100mm main gun, DShK 12.7mm M1938/46 heavy machine gun. Over 275 T-54s and T-55s are in Mozambique; may be used in Rhodesia by Cubans or terrorists.

Another Cuban prisoner in Angola. Many Cubans have been executed by FNLA and UNITA forces.



and, to give the Kremlin leaders their dues, they pulled off the neatest political confidence trick of the past decade, beating the Americans, as it were, at their own game.

In his relations with the black states, Castro has regularly proclaimed that "African blood flows freely through our veins," which is probably one of the reasons why his forces are so readily accepted by the more radical front-line states. Whether Cubans will now be allowed to operate against the Rhodesians is another matter altogether, and although opinion is against such a move, I believe this possibility cannot be discounted in the medium-term future.

It is very unlikely that Zambia would permit Cuban soldiers to cross into Rhodesia. The Zambian government was critical of the MPLA's original decision to accept Cuban military assistance. President Kaunda—when referring to the massive shipments of Soviet weapons and Cuban men—warned of the "plundering tiger and its deadly cubs now coming through the back door."

President Machel would also be reluctant to accept the risks involved in allowing Cuban forces to freely infiltrate into Rhodesia across his border. Mozam-

bique remains economically linked with South Africa, despite the measures taken since independence, so the country may be vulnerable to pressures from Pretoria. In addition, Frelimo has always accepted the principle that "freedom must be won by the people themselves—not by outsiders," and President Machel would therefore be unsympathetic towards a massive influx of foreign troops which do not, incidentally, include Tanzanian soldiers. Mozambique's position has been clearly stated by President Machel: "The Zimbabweans will defeat Ian Smith without Cuban participation."

The use of Cuban troops inside Rhodesia would also lead to further Western and South African support for the illegal regime. Henry Kissinger made the comment, for what it is worth, in 1976 that America's reaction to possible Cuban involvement in the rest of southern Africa should "not be deduced from what we did in Angola."

The British government is known to have been involved in extensive behind-the-scenes diplomacy in an attempt to ensure that Cuban soldiers are not deployed in what technically remains a British colony. South Africa is clearly reluctant to become embroiled in fighting inside Rhodesia—particularly after its Angolan debacle—but the presence of Cuban troops could lead to additional South African support for the Smith regime.

"Don't think about the Cubans in relation to Rhodesia," one of the southern African presidents recently remarked, "think about them in relation to Namibia (South West Africa)."

The MPLA's victory certainly represented a great boost to Swapo's morale, and already this movement has established training camps inside Angola. It is therefore likely that some Cuban

**Cuban instructors, foreground, with MPLA recruits at training camp near Luanda.**



**SOLDIER OF FORTUNE**



**Cuban tank commander in Angola. Latest intell sources in Washington estimate 50,000 Cubans in Africa, 26,000 in Angola.**

instructors are training Swapo "freedom fighters." A Swapo representative met Castro in Moscow during 1976 and the question of additional assistance was no doubt raised.

"If, as a result of the racists' intention to maintain their occupation over part of Angolan territory, the war extends to Namibia," Castro warned during 1976, then "the responsibility will be that of South Africa." The Cubans have certainly not ruled out the possibility of fielding troops inside South West Africa. And Swapo officials, when questioned about the possibility, have replied that no decision has yet been reached. But Cuban involvement in South West Africa would involve facing South African armed forces

on their own territory, a much less attractive proposition than in Angola.

So, at least for the foreseeable future, Cuban assistance to Swapo is likely to be confined to the training camps within Angola.

For the time being, the Cubans remain in Angola, but even this exercise has its problems. Anti-Cuban rebel forces led by Dr. Jonas Savimbi are still active in the southern regions of this vast land and Unita guerrillas are hitting as and when the opportunities arise.

There is also word that Holden Roberto's FNLA movement is likely to start operations along a new front along the northern Angolan border with Zaire.

In Northern Angola, over the last six months, Cuba has also unleashed a reign of terror against the civilian populace in order to stamp out resistance to the Marxist government. According to observers in London more than 70,000 civilians have died at the hands of the MPLA and their Cuban allies.

Armored units consisting of Russian and APC's manned by Cubans, with helicopter support have attacked villages at dawn and shot the inhabitants as they tried to escape. MIG's napalm forest areas to force out refugees so they maybe slaughtered. Thousands of children between the ages of 10 and 17 are being flown to Havana for "education." Any parents who oppose the Cubans and MPLA are liable to be shot. The bewildered parents speculate that their children maybe used as cheap labor on Cuban sugar plantations.

To date, over one million refugees have fled from their residences to seek shelter in the northern bush. One villager told how a column of 6,000 refugees had been ambushed by Cubans and the mpla troop near Sao Salvador. The refu-

(continued on page 64)

**MPLA troops at Luanda airport armed with Russian PPSH 1941 submachine guns.**



# Thailand: Last Refuge For Freedom

by Thomas D. Reisinger



Thailand, which is certainly one of the last bastions of freedom in Southeast Asia, is currently undergoing a test of its national determination to repulse a growing problem of insurgency from neighboring Cambodia (Democratic Kampuchea), Malaysia, Burma and, to some extent, Laos. While the major border clashes have involved elements of the Thai armed forces combatting the Khmer Rouge and guerrillas of the Thai Communist Party, based in and largely supported by Cambodia, other significant engagements have been fought near the Burmese border and farther south near the Malaysian frontier.

The prevailing attitude on the part of the Thai government and populace appears to be one of cautious optimism, indicating a thorough confidence in the well-trained and equipped Thai military. Although scattered fighting is commonplace, the seriousness of the various conflicts has not seemed to result in a state of all-out readiness on the military front.

The most serious, and most highly volatile, situation exists in the relations of Thailand with the government of Cambodia. During a recent excursion to the former, this author was amazed at the almost daily reports of incidents along the highly contested border separating these two ancient rival nations. Bangkok newspapers carried numerous accounts of bloodshed, kidnappings, and military confrontations which have somehow

largely escaped the interest of Western newspapers and, therefore, have not received nearly the publicity they deserve.

One remarkable incident that received little, if any, exposure in the United States was the kidnapping in February of over 250 Thai villagers by Thai insurgents in Ubon Ratchathani province and their forced resettlement across the border in Cambodia. This example indicates the certain support and refuge granted to Thai communists by the Khmer Rouge and their parallel goals of terrorism, murder, and domination of Thai civilians.

While occasional large-scale fighting has occurred between units of the Thai military and the Khmer Rouge, most of Cambodian communist activity has been limited to occasional ambushes of civilians and military personnel enroute to various locations along the border. Buses seem to be a favorite target and attacks by Cambodians have recently occurred near Aranyaprathet where seven unarmed men and women were slaughtered by AK-47s.

In February, the government of Thailand, in an effort to quell a potential escalation in hostilities with Cambodia, sent a delegation to Phnom Penh to meet with representatives of the Cambodian rulership. The communists declared that they were not to blame for border incidents and disclaimed any responsibility for the strained relations between the two nations. Therefore, the situation remains

**SOF Business Manager Tom Reisinger and young Cambodian friend during Reisinger's visit to the Aranyaprathet Khmer Refugee Camp 4 miles from the Cambodian border. If U.S. would admit refugees like her and her family on a purely humanitarian basis, their lives might be saved.**

in an uneasy limbo with expectations that the potential for increased fighting is rather high.

While I was encouraged by the apparent fitness and readiness of the Thai military, I was simultaneously concerned whether the Thai government is depending upon any assistance from the United States should the military situation worsen. In view of the fates of Cambodia and Vietnam, any trust, in my opinion, put in the United States would be ill-founded indeed.

The real strength of Thailand rests with her people, who are basically independent and anti-communist. Since Thailand has never been a colony of any other nation, its nationalistic attitude flourishes and, with it, the determination to remain free in face of the collectivist tide that is rising against her borders.

The refugee situation is serious, especially in regards to the Cambodians. They are currently located in two major camps, Surin and Aranyaprathet, both of which I was able to visit, thanks to permission from the Thai government.

Currently, "boat people" from Vietnam are being given priority in resettlement.

ment to the United States. There is a 90-day limitation, I was told, on the processing of these cases which has, apparently, been agreed to by the U.S.

While many of the Vietnamese certainly deserve prompt attention and entry into the U.S., I find it difficult to understand why Cambodians and Laotians are not given equitable treatment.

There are four basic categories used in determining the eligibility for refugees to enter the United States. These are: 1) Those with relatives in the United States; 2) those who are former workers for a U.S. government agency; 3) former military or government officials; 4) those who would qualify for resettlement for humanitarian reasons.

Because of these categories, those who need assistance most are usually stranded in various refugee camps with little hope of ever being relocated to another nation.

Conditions in the three refugee camps that I visited (Nan, Aranyaprathet and Surin) were quite different from what I expected. All were relatively sanitary and seemed to have adequate medical personnel present to see to the needs of the inhabitants.

Among relief workers that I met were representatives of The International Rescue Committee, P.V.O. (formerly Project Vietnam Orphans), Catholic Relief Services, and Friends For All Children. The consensus of opinion of these individuals was that while immediate aid is required for the welfare of the refugees, only sponsorship and relocation to a third country can solve their long-range problems.

After six months in a camp, a person adopts what is termed the "welfare mentality," with the result being a lack of initiative to retain responsibility for his

representatives and urge them to introduce legislation which would admit refugees of all nationalities on an equal basis with humanitarian need being the major criterion. Secondly, arrange to obtain sponsorship information through, for example, the American Council for Nationality Services, 20 West 40th Street, New York, New York 10018 (telephone: (212) 279-2715) or the HEW Refugee Task Force (telephone: (800) 424-0212).

Thirdly, since intermediate aid is needed on a continual basis, financial donations sent to a relief agency involved in refugee work or to an individual directly associated with the refugees could be put to excellent utilization.

One person with whom I am well acquainted and can personally vouch for is Mr. Tith Sarun. He has helped to organize numerous self-help projects at Aranyaprathet among his fellow Cam-



The Thai government has been extremely generous in granting asylum to the refugee groups, but can not and should not be depended upon to continually support the minimum of 101,000 refugees now within her borders. Other countries, such as the United States, should shoulder an increasing share of the burden, especially since it was the inaction of the U.S. which resulted in the flood of displaced persons.

I tend to believe that the government of Thailand plans to resettle most of the Laotians on its own soil and probably would be able to do so without much difficulty since the ethnic diversity does not have the background of rivalry as, say, the Thai relationship with the Vietnamese. Therefore, the eventual fate of the Khmer and Vietnamese is a matter of priority and concern on the part of the Thais as well as among workers for the various relief agencies dealing with refugee problems.

**Laotian refugee camp at Mae Jarim, Nan Province, Thailand. Recent extermination policies by Vietnamese and Pathet Lao have included use of poison gas against Meo tribespeople who formerly had aligned themselves with United States. Former American allies have it extremely rough.**

personal well-being. The feeling of utter hopelessness leads to major forms of mental depression which have occasionally led to suicide by the victim.

The average farmers and laborers are destined to remain in these camps for the foreseeable future, unless pressure can be applied to the United States Congress to admit a much larger number of needy individuals and their families. Particularly serious is the situation regarding widows with minor children. These, perhaps most of all, need assistance from those Americans interested in helping.

I strongly suggest that anyone concerned should contact his congressional

bodians and is more than willing to initiate others should the financial resources become available. If you're interested in writing to him or sending contributions, address your correspondence to: Mr. Tith Sarun or c/o Mr. Robert Ashe, P.O. Box 11-1482, Bangkok 11, Thailand.

Even though it is beset by many war-related problems, Thailand faces a critical test of strength in the coming months and years. The possibility that it could be the next "domino" is not a pleasant realization. Its national character and its dignified adherence to the principles of human freedom can only serve to put any aggressor on notice that this country will not go gently and meekly but rather will fight on as a lion for its national sovereignty.





Part Two  
**The French Foreign Legion Today**  
 by William Brooks

*In the previous issue, Bill Brooks, a veteran of the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division, described how he joined the French Foreign Legion at Fort de Nogent in Paris in 1972, taking the required Legion alias of Walter Bride. Shipped to Aubagne, near Marseille, general headquarters of the French Foreign Legion since 1963, Brooks and other engaged volunteers were interrogated as to their backgrounds and reasons for joining the Legion, a procedure designed to weed out major criminals.*

*Having passed this initial test, Brooks was shipped to Corsica for basic training where he discovered that in contrast to the U.S. Army's emphasis on intensive basic training and personal and collective hygiene, the Legion emphasized blind obedience, the French were oblivious to personal and group hygiene, and basic training was extremely limited, emphasizing physical conditioning and marksmanship. The Legion was strictly divided by rank, with Legionnaires and corporals sharing the same facilities, NCOs and officers having separate quarters.*

*After basic, Brooks was sent to Stage Transmission School, one of three Legion*

*specialty schools, where he trained as a communications operator. After completion of this training, Brooks requested transfer to the African Republic of Djibouti, a request which was soon granted. He arrived at Djibouti on 13 February 1973 and was transported to Camp Gabode, home of the Command Support and Services Company and the 2nd Work Company, 13th Demi-Brigade, which provided all needs for the exterior companies, the peace keeping forces located in border forts along the frontiers of Somalia and Ethiopia.*

At Gabode I met Brunin, who had been here for a number of months already, and who was assigned to the HQ Protection Unit of the Command Company. He also worked in a general repair shop and lived with his section in a wooden barracks on the backward fringes of the camp. We were very happy to see each other, and he invited me over to his room for a few beers.

When we arrived, I noticed many homemade cages and bird traps littering the sand around the barracks. Each cage seemed to be occupied by a large

Candidates at Legion NCO school at Oueau, Djibouti, gather to discuss scheduled exercise. Weapons are standard-issue MAS 49/56 rifles with blank adapters attached to ends of barrels.



Djibouti: Brooks, standing guard at bridge at Ho-Ho, is joined by friendly native. Author carries standard issue MAS 49/56 rifle.

number of chirping field sparrows, large land turtles, and a few cats.

"What do you do with these, Brunin?" I asked.

"Oh, we eat 'em," he said seriously. "You never get enough to eat around here, and if you go to a *compagnie exterieur* you'll be on the bloody frontier with nothing to eat at all but that damn Portuguese beef steak (Legion jargon for a can of sardines). You better hope you get assigned here to Gabode. It's better, you know."

We entered the doorway through a mosquito net and sat down on his neatly made bunk, which was covered by a colorful Arab blanket, as were the others in the room.

"Don't you have to use regulation blankets?" I asked.

"No," he replied. "Here you do what you damn well please, no one buggers you, you know, just do like they say and you won't get beat. If you go to the frontier—"

He was interrupted by a skinny Legionnaire with a huge brown beard, black teeth, and skin the color of leather, who stuck his head through the open window and asked if I was "another Johnnie." When Brunin replied, "yes," the man

**1st REC (Legion Cavalry Regiment) forms up at 1976 ceremony held at Chateau Neuf du Pape, 8 kms east of Orange, France. Brooks served with 1st REC at end of his enlistment.**



asked if we wanted some cat because he was "cooking some up."

I said, "who is that?"

"Oh, that's Le Fou, he's crazy as hell, been here for 11 years. Can't go back to France, killed somebody, I think."

"What's he talkin' about, cats and all," I asked.

"Oh, he's skinnin' cats this evening. Eats 'em all the time. Go look if you want."

I walked to the window and looked out. Le Fou had a cat lying spread-eagled on top of an oil drum and was totally engrossed in skinning it.

"This ain't like home here," Brunin said with a grin. "Some of these people ain't nothin' but animals. You'll see, the



your French francs for *nigger geld* (Legion jargon for Djibouti francs). Might as well spend it. There ain't

**Orange, France: Legionnaires of 1st REC (Legion Cavalry Regiment) take break during exercises. Vehicle is AML90, Panhard armored car, carrying 90mm gun.**

nothin' in the fuckin' *bled* (French jargon for desert) you're gonna buy."

We spent the hot evening drinking cold beers on the veranda of the Bar Menalik, then strolled through the human deluge of Djibouti's Quartier Deux, whose main attribute was an overabundance of prostitutes, grossly deformed freaks, and thieves.

"Don't be afraid of these bastards," Brunin said. "They won't bother a white kepi as long as there's two. Stinkin' scum, they'll cut your throat for a fag or two."

We entered a brightly lighted shack called the "Zanzibar," pushed our way through a throng of outstretched hands, whores, and whiteclad local militiamen, through a second door and into the room where we stood at the bar near the juke box.

"Always stand where you can see the whores. They'll rob you blind," Brunin advised. "It ain't so bad now, not any of the exterior companies are in town on *permission*. When they come in, it's the devil to pay. Trapped out there for months. You'll see. Go ahead and get drunk if you want. If you get assigned to the frontier you'll do nothin' tomorrow nohow. Liaison only come in once every three or four days. Me? I only goes to the *bled* when the Colonel does; maybe

desert is the Legion, and in the desert you live like a bloody Wog. That's how you fight 'em, by livin' just like 'em only usin' your brain. Wogs got n' brains. Come on, Breed (Although my alias was Bride, Brunin always gave it the French pronunciation). Let's go down town. If you're shipped out to the frontier tomorrow, you won't get back here for maybe five or six months. Let's go to town; I'll get you a uniform and we can change



Grand Barre. Legionnaire digs through kit on back of AML60, light armored car carrying 60mm mortar.

I'll kill me a Wog here in town, bloody scum.

"They almost had a riot when Pompidieu came for a visit last January, posted me on the bridge with my rifle loaded. If we had a riot, I didn't want *no fusil*, no sir, give me an axe handle any day. It ain't like home, Breed. You'll see. If you're on the frontier least you can kill you a Wog. Here we just feed 'em. Bloody scum, look at 'em. All them nigger lovers in England oughta come over here.

"Can't even get a taxi in London no more, not even a Queen's Guard in uniform, everything polluted by the bloody Wogs. Come on, Breed, let's drink up! Ever notice how a Wog smells? You smell 'em, you'll smell 'em in the middle of the night when you're layin' in the rocks at Guister or Doumeira when they're comin' to slit your throat. You'll see, Breed, you'll see and you'll probably love it."

The more we drank, the more he talked. Brunin was my reception committee; he told me all I wanted to hear. He'd been here eight months. He was a *Vieux* (old timer); I was the *Bleu* (tenderfoot).

"You can desert from the frontier if you want. Go right on over to the Wogs, go to Ethiopia though not Somali. Too many Russians in Somali. If the Somali get you, they'll throw you so far back in a dungeon they'll have to feed you with a sling shot. Beat you around and send you back. Ethiopians will send you to the Consulate in Addis Ababa. Being an American you'd have it made. Frogs are all sent back here if they're caught. Two Germans went last fall, made it too. The Adjutant got a letter from one.

They let the foreigners go, only send back the Frogs."

"Trying to keep good relations maybe," I said.

"Who knows," he continued. "Who cares, bloody Frogs, anyway. Bad as the

fuckin' Wogs. Don't know how many people desert from the frontier. Never see 'em. If they're caught they're kept at the company, and that's bad. Make 'em do the *pelote* in the exterior companies. Can't do it at Gabode, too much rank around. *Gendarmes*, naval officers, they all eat at the mess at Gabode, bad for the Legion seein' a poor bugger doing the *pelote*. You'll see, Breed, this is the real Legion, not them blokes ass sittin' in Corte. I just hope I can shoot me a Wog."

"Let's go," I said. "I've seen enough."

"Yeah," he replied. "You reckon you'll go to the frontier? Bad place it is, but fun I reckon."

"I don't know, Brunin. I'll see in the morning."

Morning arrived hot as ever. I reported to the placement office and was assigned to the 4th Company stationed at Holl-Holl. The liaison arrived that afternoon. I said goodbye to Brunin, boarded the truck along with four others, and positioned myself as best I could to absorb the shocks of the 40-km ride across rocky desert.

We arrived at Holl-Holl, and I was assigned to the 3rd Platoon as a light machine gunner. Since there was no one in my barracks who could speak English, I conversed with my German *comarade* Keller. The barracks at Holl-Holl were more spacious than at Gabode, and in the desert one had a chance to really breathe. Four nights a week movies were shown, and prostitutes were provided for the Legion in the government-sponsored bordello, the BMC (*Bordello Militaire Controlee*). Six whores, and 130 Legionnaires, however, is not my idea of romance.

"What do you want," said Keller. "If every Legionnaire had a whore there would be a hundred whores, then the damn *schwein* would come across the wire and cut our throats while we slept. *So fast alles Arabe . . . Drecke hunde.*"

The only other English-speaking person in the post was an Englishman named Schutt, and we struck up a friendly relationship. Schutt had two years' service and was well acquainted with Brunin, whom he called Patty.

"All Irishmen are Patties," he said. "Just like all English-speaking persons here are Johnnies."

"And just like all Wogs live south of Calais," I said.

"Oh, you've talked with Patty, all right," he said, laughingly. "But once you've seen these Frogs in action you'll



Croatian Legionnaire with French M1952 7.5mm General Purpose MG during training exercise in Djibouti.

know why we say at home, 'Wogs begin at Calais.'"

"I know already," I said. "It's easy enough to see how they have lost every war they've fought for the last 100 years."

"You're too serious, Billy," he said. "Take the French for what they are, a bunch of Frogs; hang out with the Germans or the Francos (Spanish fascists). They won't let you down. The French Foreign Legion is only as good as its worst German Legionnaire."

"That's true," I said. And the longer I stayed, the truer it became.

The post at Holl-Holl was officially designated Poste Lieutenant Colonel De Sairigne, named for an officer of the 13th DBLE killed in Indochina. The post was situated on the Djibouti-Addis-Ababa Railroad at the point where it crossed a bridge over a river bed. The river bed was dry 360 days a year, turning into a rapid moving torrent when it rained. The mission of the company was to protect the bridge.

Two men guarded the bridge day and night, one posted at either end. Two sandbag bunkers were also strategically placed and protected a light machine gun, kept in the guard house except at night when it was placed in battery. The bridge was surrounded by barbed wire that usually washed away after every rainfall and had to be replaced.

If "suspicious persons" were thought to be in the area, a three-man guard was established underneath the bridge. The Djibouti-Addis-Ababa "Express" crept over the bridge four times daily, carrying commercial and military supplies destined for the Ethiopian government. Djibouti was the only major Ethiopian outlet to the sea; their port link of Mas-sawa-Assmara was occupied by Eritrean rebels, who became more and more audacious after the death of Emperor Haile

**Grand Barre, the Death Valley of Djibouti. On return from exercises, men assemble here for debriefing. Note AML90s (Panhard armored cars) carrying 90mm guns. Jeeps are Hotchkiss, French copies of U.S. W.W. II jeeps.**



**SOLDIER OF FORTUNE**



**Legion Band forms up at French Foreign Legion headquarters, Aubagne, France. Inscription on statue in background reads "The Legion and its dead." Statue was first erected in Africa in 1920s, moved to France in 1963.**

Selassie and the beginning of Ethiopia's drift towards Marxism.

The 4th Company was divided into five platoons of 25 men each, with the exception of the Command and Service Platoon, which was somewhat larger. The other four platoons were motorized infantry. Each platoon took its turn guarding the bridge and the post and performing fatigue duties, while the other three patrolled the frontier, either on foot or in trucks. This was called "touring the bush" and usually amounted to a



10-day excursion to one of the numerous frontier waterholes, setting up a defensive position and patrolling the area, either between the next *puits d'eau* or reconning across the border into Ethiopia or Somalia. The majority of the time was spent digging emplacement and dreaming of something cold to drink. In the hot climate food became secondary and everyone's weight dropped considerably.

The Company's third function was to guard La Barrage at Djibouti, a 10-foot-high wire fence which surrounded the landward side of the town. It was topped with concertina and set behind a four-foot-high double-apron barbed wire emplacement arranged about 10 meters in depth. This wire was set behind a mine field 10 meters deep, strewn with Stolperdraht attached to anti-personnel mines and 44mm parachute flares. The mine field was set behind another string of double-apron barbed wire three meters deep and then a double strand of concertina. Signs facing outward were painted with a death's head and marked in French and Arabic, "*Mines — Danger de Mort.*" Every 500 meters was a wooden guard tower equipped with a telephone and search light.

Foot patrols, roving patrols, and ambushes lay in wait for anyone who had crossed La Barrage, except at Poste 6, which was controlled by French *Garde Mobils*. Poste 6 covered the only paved road artery into the city of Djibouti. Poste 6 was situated on the *route Italien* Djibouti-Yoboki. All persons entering the city were required to possess a valid residency card or a visitation pass, approved by the French in order to prevent communist insurgents from entering the city, stocking arms, and creating strikes and riots. The route was blocked by a *Chevaux de frise* and Spanish Riders. Those persons wanting to enter illegally had to cross the barrage or swim around it. A lot of them did but most of them didn't.

I performed more than 150 days of duty on La Barrage, each time as Corporal of the Relief, changing the guards, establishing ambushes or doing dawn foot patrols to see where the *Bounjouis* (French slang for Arabs) had sneaked through the wire during the night. It never ceased to amaze me how many people successfully negotiated the mines and obstacles, eluded the patrols and ambushes, and successfully entered the city undetected. No matter how much wire was strung, every night someone got through successfully.

Many, however, were not so lucky. Each tour at La Barrage was marked by death in some form, usually by people striking *Stolperdraht* and sending a 40mm parachute flare through their torsos. These accidents always seemed to take place on my patrol route, so I

# The Rise and Fall

They Had The

1 BEP (*Battalion Etrangere Parachutiste*) was formed—or, rather, custom built—in 1948 to act as a mobile striking force in Indo-China, a role which had previously been allocated to footslogging infantry or amphibious armored vehicles. They were a long way from "home," the North African desert and Sidi Bel Abbes, but quickly adapted, and their combination of aggressiveness and mobility gave the Vietminh pause for thought.

But all the aggression in the world could only have a limited effect. However good the man in the field, the men at the top seemed unable to exploit their achievements or take positive action. French army intelligence was abysmal, at best days behind the Vietminh; in their turn, the Vietminh had their spies everywhere and successfully mingled with the local population by day, only to appear and wreak havoc by night.

The war, in the early stages at least, was fought over the communications system of Indo-China. To protect vital roads, the lifelines, the French deployed their forces in hundreds of tiny garrisons; in response the Vietminh mined, ambushed, and besieged, and only too often columns summoned to the relief of the besieged arrived only in time to bury the dead and rebuild the defenses. When the garrisons controlled effectively only their own buildings and knew of an impending attack only when firing started, this outcome was hardly surprising.

1 BEP did what they could and learned their lessons well. A para presence was enough to stiffen resistance in the French colonial battalions and the paras themselves, by trying to anticipate Vietminh moves or, failing that, by mounting aggressive pursuit, did much to curb guerrilla activity: especially effective was the use of guerrilla tactics against the guerrillas—until the powers that be protested about "brutality" and "political implications." Robbed of the initiative, 1 BEP could only contain the problems, not eliminate, but they did what they could.

In 1950 the pattern of events changed. In September, General Giap, confident

in his troops' training, in his Communist-supplied weapons, and in his unlimited manpower, took the offensive and launched six battalions against two French companies at Dong Khe, the key to RC 4, one of the major highways. 250 Legion Infantry held out for two days. Although Giap lost 800 men in his assault, Dong Khe fell. Five survivors bayoneted their way to safety to tell the tale.

1 BEP at this stage was under the command of Captain Pierre Jeanpierre who, despite two wartime years spent in a concentration camp, fully appreciated the ex-Wehrmacht troops who made up the bulk of his command. With Dong Khe fallen, they were ordered to the Dong Khe area to stiffen local forces, a hodgepodge of three North African battalions, led by an inexperienced gunner colonel. Link up was effected on 19 September but for 10 days Giap avoided contact. Then on 30 September, the order came to recapture Dong Khe—with four battalions against 30.

1 BEP headed the column and set off for the fort; they were detected several miles away. For success, the only solution was all-out attack before the enemy reorganized. Instead Lepage, the gunner colonel, ordered withdrawal and the following day compounded the error by dividing his force and commencing a pincer attack. Both columns hit heavy opposition and only extricated themselves with difficulty. To make matters worse, at this point headquarters ordered the Lepage group to relieve and escort Colonel Charton's column evacuating Cao Range, north of Dong Khe. The only trouble was that a Vietminh army, now fully alerted, lay between Lepage and the RV.

Charton, already angry at pulling out from an impregnable position, travelled heavy and slowly. He arrived at the RV a day late and only then discovered that Lepage was still battling farther to the south and that there was no hope of retaking Dong Khe. He promptly jettisoned his vehicles and stores and set off on foot to aid Lepage. On the 6th, he came

usually had the task of extracting the fly-covered corpses from the barbed wire apron, a job I found quite distasteful and which has since ruined my appetite for any type of burnt meat. For days after, I would wash my hands with cologne.

Service on La Barrage also entailed water ambushes. At night many insurgents would attempt to swim around the Barrage, and we would hide in wait

in the reeds near the coast or in the bottom of our rubber raft.

Service on La Barrage, however, was totally one-sided, since I do not know of one person attempting to enter Djibouti illegally who ever shot back. Most of them were captured at night after trapping themselves in a mine field, being caught in a blinding search light and scared shitless by having the ground to their front and rear riddled with bullets. They were mostly half-naked illit-

# of the Legion's Elite

## Guts To Be Honest!

within sight of the other group, but an army still lay between them. Charton threw in 10 attacks, and the Vietminh retired, but the block remained. On the other side, Lepage too was having problems. Of the two columns, one, with 1 BEP and a Moroccan battalion, was surrounded and decimated despite having inflicted appalling losses on the Vietminh. Almost out of ammunition, 1 BEP clawed their way back to Lepage's position after a nightmare two-day trip over jungled mountains, stiff with Vietminh, on 6 October.

On the 7th, Lepage ordered an attack to link up with Charton, further ordering 1 BEP to head the assault. Reluctantly, they accepted the order—to charge uphill against odds of 20 to one. Incredibly, they did it—but the battalion was reduced to less than 100 men, mostly wounded.

The crowning irony was that the Moroccans, following behind, broke and fled, and their panic spread to Charton's irregulars. The bungled retreat cost 1 BEP 90 percent of its men and all but one of its officers.

Dong Khe was the turning point in the war and led eventually to Dien Bien Phu, the attempt by the over-optimistic, ill-informed French to bring Giap to a decisive battle. In November 1953, a reformed 1 BEP took part in the jump that secured the initial site and henceforth acted as mobile reserve. On 8 May, the fortress fell, with 1 BEP still fighting; the survivors were marched into captivity.

In 1955 the Regiment was formed a third time, now as REP, with Jeanpierre, now Colonel, at its head. After the political betrayals in Indo-China, involvement in Suez was an anticlimax. From Suez the battalion moved to Algeria where it came into its own.

After six months 1 REP, having forced the FLN terrorists from the hills and into the towns, were universally recognized as elite troops, even for the Legion. In January 1957, they too switched their attention to the towns and, under command of General Massu and the 10 Para Division, fought fire with fire and cleared

erate scarecrows, shivering in fear before these stereotypes of imperialism festooned with weapons. If they had firearms they must have buried them before attempting their entry. What I captured at La Barrage was only half-starved human misery.

Camels were our biggest problem. Wandering into the mine fields at night, they would send up a series of flares and mines that lit up the countryside

up urban terrorism in a matter of weeks. In two years, 1 REP accounted for 2,000 rebels with a loss of 123 Legionnaires.

With the end in sight, Jeanpierre was killed in action, one of the last of those who had been fighting more or less continuously since 1948. His loss was a severe blow to his men and confirmed many in their resolution that terrorism should never succeed in overthrowing the French presence in Algeria, the Legion's home. When, in 1961, with military victory won, De Gaulle handed over Algeria, the decision was regarded as a personal affront and the ultimate betrayal by the REP.

The officers, followed by the bulk of the men and several other units, revolted, and seized control of Algeria's major cities in an all but bloodless coup. But the old ties died hard, the leaders vacillated, opportunities were not taken, and the French government had time to recover. As punishment, 1 REP was disbanded, its officers heavily penalized, and for some time the whole future of the Legion hung in doubt.

Could it happen again? Evidently the French think not, as the Legion continues, and indeed a repetition of such a chain of events is unlikely. That it happened at all is understandable: to the Legionnaire the regiment is family and home, all other loyalties are a poor second. That 1 REP should be the focal point is natural—to have the thin end of the wedge for 13 years and in that period to be annihilated twice and betrayed twice is a pretty rough record.

The rights and wrongs are clear cut—an army should follow orders, not emotions, it should be loyal, it should not intervene in affairs of state even when the state seems incompetent. But right or wrong, it's comforting to think that now and again someone has enough guts to turn round on the complacent political puppet masters and say, "we've had enough." If ever anyone earned the right it was 1 REP—and if they were wrong, at least they had the guts to be honest.

*This article is reprinted from Assegai: The Magazine of the Rhodesian Army.*

and sent alert units scurrying to the destination, only to find these big hulks standing terrified in the spotlight, their feet entangled in concertina wire. Escorting these beasts out was a major problem.

After years of being raised by Arabs, they inherently hate Europeans—it must be the difference in body odor. With the ability to spit, bite, and kick, a camel is a dangerous brute, and I never met one that wasn't as mean as a wet hornet.

Coaxing camels out of a mine field was just as unpleasant as extracting corpses from the wire and much more dangerous. The old romantic conception of sun-bronzed Legionnaires racing across the Sahara on camel-back must truly have been legendary falsification. The Ships of the Desert I met were no friend of the white man.

Despite the seemingly active life I was leading, I, like my comrades, was continually burdened by a feeling of loneliness. This became especially acute after my first year in Africa. I now had two years' service in the Legion and at least 18 more months to do in Djibouti. By this time I was a sun-burnt *Vieux*, an old-timer, a desert Legionnaire. Our rare visits to the city of Djibouti on weekend *permission* was our only escape from this feeling of solitude. On weekends the *Exterieurs* were readily noticeable from the bureaucrats and functionaries of Gabode. The scrapes and scars on our elbows, hands, and knees contrasted to our immaculate short khaki uniforms. We were also marked by over-tanned skin, sun-splotched faces, peeling noses and chapped lips framed by a scrubbed white kepi with the bill bent upwards, cocked askew on the head or tilted lower than regulation over the eyes.

*Exterieurs* were the nemesis of Djibouti, making Saturday nights in Dodge City look like a White House tea reception. The *Exterieurs*, their pockets stuffed with three or four months' pay, flooded the bars, restaurants, and jewelry shops. Beginning the evening with lobster, pepper steak, and beer, they would move on in groups either to the more respectable bars on the Place Menalik or to the Arab quarter where they would travel like wolves, swaggering drunk down the alleys, looking for a fight. Bars were wrecked, teenage whores bought, sold, beaten, and knifed, goats stolen, killed, and thrown aboard the trucks, merchandise poached, and food stands pillaged. Only the Legion MPs ventured against the *Exterieurs*. The local *milice* was detested as much as the French *gendarmes*. "Only a Legionnaire can arrest a Legionnaire" was the rationale, and many a skull was cracked to prove the point.

On Saturday night in Quartier Deux, the Legion declared war on everyone. Pimps, perverts, prostitutes, priests, or the police, they were all the same. *Bounjouis*, *Salauds*, or *Arabe Scheisse*. The Legion ruled the alleys and the bars, and for all the damage done there was never much complaint. In a country whose only commodities are Coca Cola and prostitution, the damage done was more than compensated for by the money spent. In Djibouti life was quick, flesh was fast, and booze was cheap.



# Hands Vs. Guns

by Mike Echanis

*Whether it's a demonstration of unbelievable mind control as a vehicle drives over his chest or a spoke is driven through his neck while he supports a 25-pound bucket of water without pain or bleeding, the disarming of pistols, sub-machine guns, rifles, and knives, or knife fighting, knife throwing, garrotes or crossbows, Michael D. Echanis, former senior instructor of the U.S. Army Special Forces and U.S. Navy SEALs, makes it look as though it was all part of a day's training.*

*Echanis has been featured on the front cover of Soldier of Fortune (November 1977) and Black Belt magazines (June 1977). Black Belt is featuring another cover story on him in late 1978.*

*Echanis' new nine-volume Hand-to-Hand Combat Special Weapons Tactics series takes the American soldier and adventurer step by step through his highly developed programs of instruction. Listed by Black Belt Magazine as the "most effective system of hand-to-hand combat in the modern world," and as one of the "deadliest forms of close-quarter combatives ever written," Echanis' systems of survival are an integral part of the background of today's soldier of unconventional warfare.*

*Privately tutored by the Grand Master of Hwa Rang Do, Joo Bang Lee, Echanis redeveloped this system of survival to approach the modern soldier with a progressive form of self-defense and personal survival, based upon combat experience and true life-and-death struggles. His program has few frills and only a percentage of the elite can survive the course of instruction. Broken noses, arms, and legs are common occurrences during training, and as Echanis has stated, "In hand-to-hand combat, you have but one choice: win or die. Therefore, our training situations attempt to simulate these circumstances as close to reality as possible."*

*Echanis is currently senior advisor to the Nicaraguan Anti-Terrorist Commando Element. He also serves as chief instructor for the personal bodyguards of General Anastasio Somoza, President of Nicaragua, and his special elite guard.*

*Soldier of Fortune recently spent a training session with Echanis (see photos) during which he demonstrated self-defense tactics against armed attacks. Echanis also gave the following tips about unarmed self defense:*

## I. Unarmed Self-Defense Against An Armed Attack

Survival from an attack by an armed assailant directed against an unarmed individual presents the most difficult and critical self-defense situation possible. Only one factor can increase the difficulty of the situation, and that is multiple armed assailants.

Two important elements must first be taken into consideration: One, the type of weapon used by the attacker and secondly, the distance or interval separating the assailant and the unarmed individual. In this training series, we will be dealing primarily with the handgun, sub-machine gun, and rifle bayonet attacks in our disarming situations. Though any armed attack may be met with these 38 basic disarming techniques, all situations will consist of variations based upon the individual's evaluation of the armed attack, its intentions, and actual lethality.

We will present these disarming techniques, any of which may suit your physical structure, psychological attitude, and reaction in critical situations, in conjunction with your ability to adjust a pre-conditioned reflex, to an infinite amount of variables. Each individual, who expects to actually learn how to defend himself in a life-and-death situation, must realize that only endless practice will bring the conditioned reflex, and that the psychological aspects can only be found within the individual during actual combat or the simulation thereof.

Continual physical and mental preparation is the answer to readiness, and these 38 disarming techniques are by no means the only answer to this critical question of life and death during an armed attack. Rather they are a basis of knowledge, giving a better understanding of the possibilities of self-defense so that the individual will search within himself to discover, through his own ingenuity and creative ability, techniques that will adapt to the situation and conform to his psychological and physical needs.

It is often said that it is better to master one technique, than to know many and master none. It is my theory that each individual must develop a minimum of three techniques to the point of a quick reacting conditioned reflex, then learn to apply them with variations at eight different angles of attack. Search for the techniques that seem natural to you, with the objective of achieving a natural flow of movement for the quick and powerful action of disarming the attacker:

Two important elements must first be taken into consideration: Number one, the distance of interval separating the assailant and the unarmed individual, and number two, the type of weapon utilized by the attacker.

In measuring the interval gap separating the armed individual and the unarmed individual, the distance between the barrel of the weapon and the center of the body, by the naked eye, keep two major factors in mind. One, for effective disarming, the unarmed individual must be within half the distance, as measured by the height of his own body, from the center point of his body to the barrel tip of the weapon. Two, it will be virtually impossible to disarm the armed assailant if the barrel of the weapon is beyond the length of the body of the unarmed individual. A standard distance, based upon the time factor involved to effectively bridge the interval gap and make contact and stabilize the weapon, is three feet for effective action, and six feet for a 25 percent chance of survival. This distance must be measured in accordance with your own height, for if you are under six feet tall, then the distance is shortened in accordance to compensate for your reaction time.

The psychological element of the armed assailant can be determined within the first 10 seconds. If he does not immediately fire upon you, then the probability of being his hostage and remaining alive is very high. Possibly then, the unarmed individual may maneuver to within three to six feet so that he may initiate his attack and successfully disarm the assailant. It will be quite difficult for the assailant to maintain constant vigilance and 360 security. When confronted from the rear, the unarmed individual must be aware of external sounds and movements, evaluate the assailant's reaction to distraction, and if the unarmed individual feels the movement or sound was enough to distract the assailant, then he must take action without *hesitation*. If confronted from the front, then the unarmed individual must observe the assailant's eyes without staring, so as not to make the attacker nervous and trigger happy, but maintain constant awareness of the focus of his eyes and the position of the weapon, and when the unarmed individual feels the movement is right and the assailant is temporarily distracted, he must take action without hesitation. Hesitation, and



that split second gained by initiating the attack utilizing the element of surprise, is lost, and you may be killed. Quick and powerful action must be initiated physically and mentally without hesitation, and only through constant practice can we achieve this proficient conditioned reflex and the ability to survive.

## II. Handgun Disarming Techniques

In disarming handguns, several factors must be taken into consideration. First is whether the handgun is an automatic or a revolver. The automatic must be completely redirected, while the revolver may be grasped from the top down, in a clamping manner, and as long as the cylinder cannot revolve, the weapon will not fire. Two, the length of the barrel and the weight of the weapon, since the longer the barrel, the more leverage you will have during disarmament, and the lighter the handgun, the more difficult it will be to dislodge it. The short, light handgun, such as .32s and derringers, is far more difficult to grasp and gain control of in comparison to a six-inch barrel .357 or a .45 automatic. The positioning of the hands and the manner of grasping the barrel are related to the direction and leverage needed for disarming the weapon. These positions will be examined closely in the following photographs.

**Echanis instructs members of Nicaraguan Anti-Terrorist Commando in knife fighting. Sgt. Garcia, on far left, was KIA by a sniper in Diriamba, February 1978.**

## III. Four Basic Rules in Unarmed Self-Defense Against a Handgun Attack

These movements must be performed in this exact chronological order.

1. Clear your body from the weapon's line of fire and angle attack.
2. Stabilize and control the weapon, grasping and redirecting its barrel, while controlling the trigger finger and wrist of the assailant's hand with your opposite hand.
3. Disarm the weapon. Redirect the barrel towards the assailant, jerking and twisting the enemy off balance, while attempting to break the trigger finger and wrist of the assailant's hand in a powerful shocking movement, disarming the weapon. Joint breaking, low kicking, and sweeping are utilized to disarm and neutralize the attacker. The unarmed individual must focus his entire concentration upon the weapon, never losing control or "feel" for it, with his primary concern being the direction of the barrel, always keeping the barrel away from his body.

4. Neutralize the enemy. A minimum of six feet should be placed between you and the disarmed assailant, while you immediately focus the weapon upon the grounded assailant. Do not make the same mistakes the assailant did; maintain your effective distance for control.

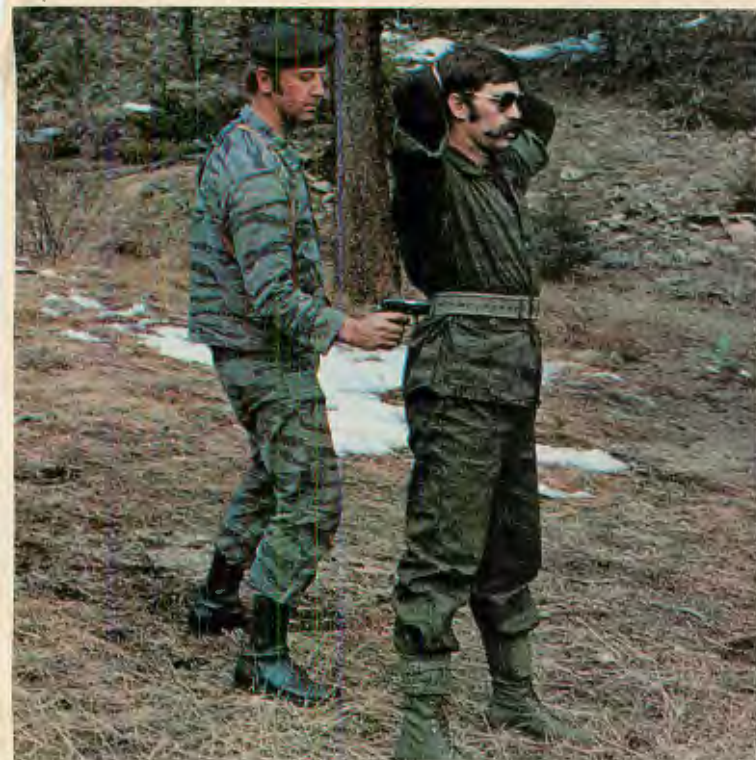
No matter how proficient the unarmed expert becomes at disarming the armed assailant, he will remain vulnerable to even the smallest weapons expert.

## IV. Left-Sided Wrist-Breaking Handgun Disarming Technique for a Frontal Attack

Remember, these are simulated disarming techniques where the conditions are perfect and in no real situation will the conditions be right, but when you are facing probable death, then these basic techniques may give you that 50-50 chance of survival.

Standing, hands raised, while confronting an attack from the front, the initial move is a direct side-step to the immediate right of the enemy, simultaneously deflecting the weapon in the opposite direction, clearing the center of the body from the line of fire and angle of attack. Two important factors are important during hand placement of the weapon. The left hand controls the wrist, while the index finger of the left hand is inserted between the retracted hammer of the handgun and the firing pin.





1. The enemy, played with a minimum of enthusiasm by SOF Contributing Editor Chuck Taylor, controls Mike Echanis with a .45 auto in this sequence of photographs in which Echanis demonstrates a "direct rear pistol disarming technique."

2. At the moment of decision, Echanis bends at the waist to his right front, steps out with his right foot to his right and concurrently initiates contact with his right upper arm and the forearm of the enemy.

# Pistol Disarming



5. Utilizing a cross-leg reaping throw, while maintaining a firm grasp with both hands on the enemy's gun hand and weapon, Echanis sweeps his opponent off his feet.

6. Echanis maintains control of the enemy, pressing his right leg on the enemy's body as he prepares to rip the .45 automatic out of the enemy's hand, breaking what ever bones may be in the way.

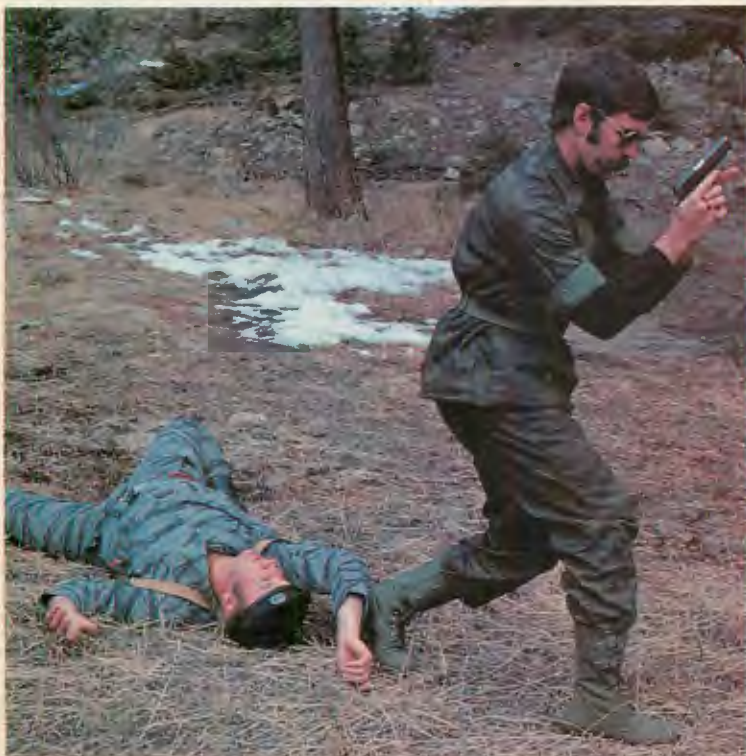


3. Echanis reverses his position, secures the enemy's gun arm with his left elbow and forearm forcing the gun hand into the crook of his right elbow. (See insert). Echanis, maintaining close body contact, insures the barrel of the gun extends beyond his right arm.

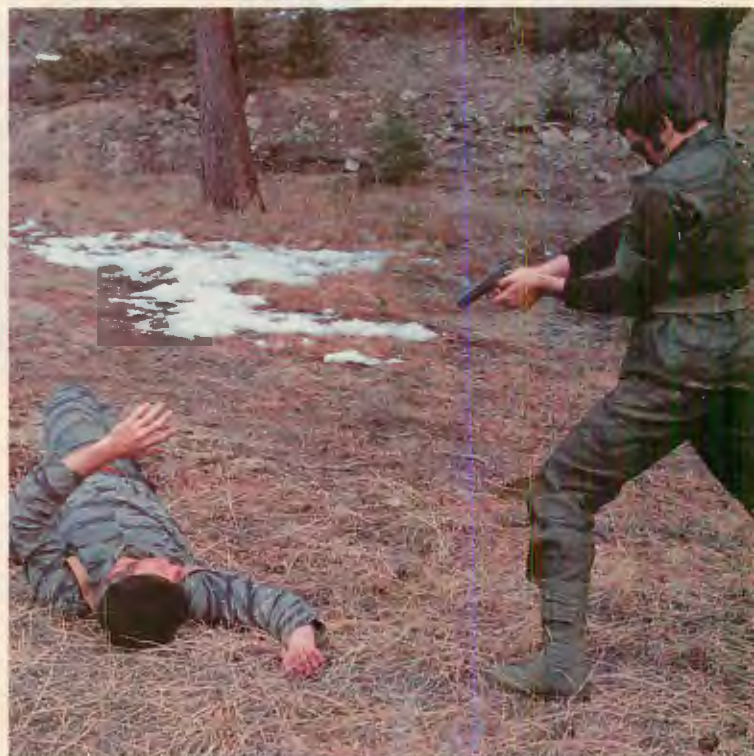


4. As Echanis forces the enemy's gun hand upward, his right hand also grasps the gun twisting the weapon in a 180 degree arc back, and concurrently throwing him off balance.

# ing Techniques



7. Having taken possession of the .45 automatic and before the enemy can react, Echanis quickly steps away.



8. Having pivoted on his left foot, Echanis now has the enemy under control. At this point, after having run these sequences the best part of an afternoon, Taylor is more than willing to admit Echanis has made his point.

# 50 Caliber Sniping: **2000 Yard Kills** by Peter R. Senovich

Reprinted from **LIMITED WAR SNIPING**  
by Peter R. Senich, published by Paladin  
Press, Boulder, Colorado.

The concept of employing special heavy caliber shoulder weapons for sniping at extreme ranges originated during the American Civil War when select numbers of Federal and Confederate Sharpshooters recorded hits at distances so great they are considered remarkable even by contemporary standards.

Their rifles, generally .50 to .58 caliber and originally intended for bench rest match shooting, possessed long, exceptionally heavy 1½- to two-inch thick octagonal barrels for safely containing the heavy powder charges required for such shooting.

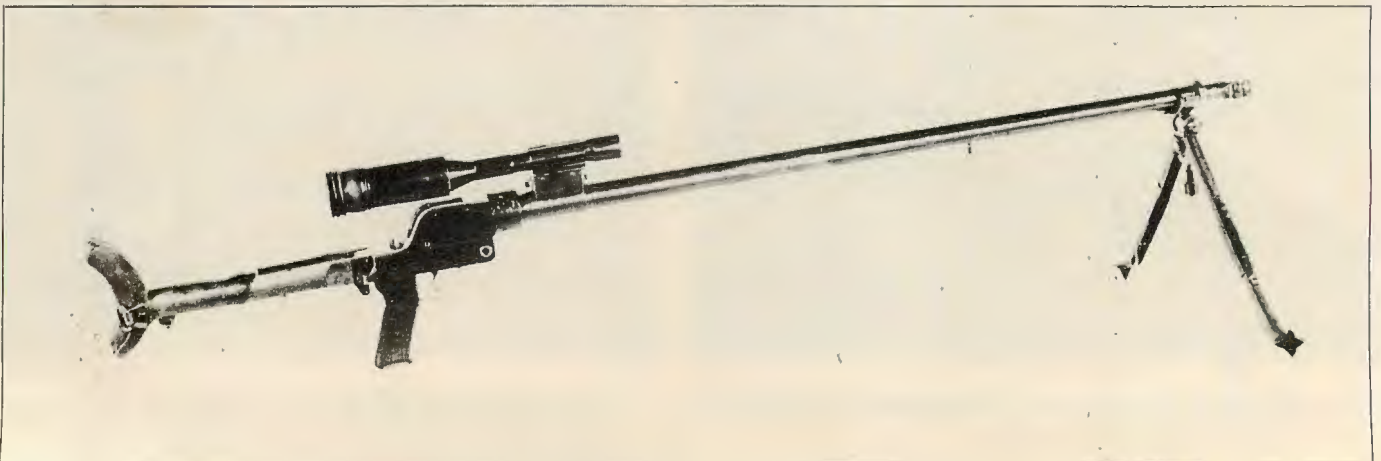
Weighing in at 25 to 35 pounds, most rifles utilized special open sights, while a number were in fact fitted with telescopic sight variants that had found favor among match shooters in the years just prior to the separation of the Union.

The scopes, of high magnification with an extremely limited field of view, were virtually useless in anything but optimum light, but did permit uncanny accuracy when utilized by competent marksmen.

Although such heavy weapon weight precluded off-hand shooting, in what

**Col. Conway sighting .50 caliber PzB 39 from prone position. (Photo credit: Lt. Col. F.B. Conway, AUS Ret.)**

**W.W. II PzB 39 anti-tank rifle modified for .50 caliber sniping by Col. Frank Conway in 1946. Conway is recognized as originator of .50 caliber AT-rifle sniping concept. (Photo credit: Lt. Col. F.B. Conway, AUS Ret.)**





**Soviet PTRD1941 14.5mm anti-tank rifle, employed by Communist forces during Korean conflict, served as basis for Capt. Brophy's special .50 cal. sniping weapon. (Photo credit: U.S. Army.)**

has long since become accepted sniper practice, the Civil War sharpshooter made effective use of suitable rests when sighting his "mark." The accomplishments of the early snipers have of course become legendary with accounts of their prowess often cited in Civil War archives.

A measure of their long range accuracy employing heavy caliber rifles can be judged by the frequency in which combatants in both armies were brought down silently behind their front lines at distances so great the report of the sharpshooter weapon could not be heard.

The thought of being singled out and shot by an unseen, unheard enemy was as disconcerting in 1864 as it remains to this day. During the early stages of World War I, the Germans were the first to employ cleverly concealed steel plates in and about their trench works for sniper protection.

The heavy plates, having small loopholes cut into them, afforded adequate protection from return fire since a bullet had to pass directly through the opening to render any harm. From behind these innovative plates, German snipers exacted an awesome toll on the Allied Armies during the first winter of combat in 1914-15.

At that point, riflemen of the British, French, and Belgian Forces, with precious few telescopic sights or the benefit of armor-piercing ammunition, were hard pressed to either penetrate or accurately place their shots through the German loopholes, even at comparatively short ranges. While there were a number of Allied marksmen capable of hitting the small apertures, they were so few in number that such efforts were to prove of little value.

Sizing up the situation, a few imaginative British officers decided that the next best measure would be to simply "bash-in" the German plates. To accomplish this, high velocity, large bore rifles once used on the African Continent for elephant hunting were brought up. As anticipated, they worked exceedingly well.

The Germans, ever mindful of these events, in addition to effective use of armor-piercing small arms ammunition against Allied plates, were to employ their heavy 13mm bolt-action Mauser anti-tank rifles. These were originally intended to neutralize British tanks and for counter-sniping as well. Interestingly, a number of German sharpshooters, active during World War II, indicate that they had also employed anti-tank rifles to some extent.

The later weapons, developed for early Wehrmacht use against lightly armored vehicles, utilized a 13mm case necked down to 7.92mm which gave extremely high velocity and penetration. It must be emphasized, however, that use of such rifles for sniping in both wars was not based on weapon accuracy, but rather, to drive opposing snipers and machine gun crews from protective cover. While effective under certain circumstances, anti-tank rifles were awkward and comparatively heavy. Owing to considerable dispersion, Wehrmacht snipers generally limited such use to 300-400 meters.

Continuing development of a satisfactory .50 caliber machine gun by the United States Army following World War I entailed the use of captured 13mm German anti-tank guns for test purposes. In order to enable Frankford Arsenal to develop ammunition for the new weapon, the Department of Experiment at Springfield Armory made up several Mauser anti-tank rifles modified to chamber .50 caliber test rounds.

Subsequent development resulted in a succession of Browning machine guns in both water and air-cooled variations.

Design efforts culminated with the two most common types employed by United States Forces during World War II, the air-cooled .50 caliber M2 aircraft and M2 heavy-barreled machine guns.

The infantry or ground .50 "M2 Heavy Barrel Flexible" variant made use of a 45-inch barrel with no jacket of any kind beyond the short one incorporating a bearing surface which was firmly screwed into the receiver. Unlike most heavy machine guns, the M2 possessed both automatic and semi-automatic fire option.

Although original design had intended the use of semi-automatic action for sighting-in or targeting, unlocking the bolt latch release and alternately pressing the trigger and bolt latch release permitted semi-automatic or, simply, single round firing. Fitted with conventional leaf and blade type sights, the rear sight base incorporated a dovetailed groove in which a telescopic sight could be mounted.

Under favorable circumstances and the right combination of gunner, telescopic sight, barrel quality, and ammunition, the "big 50s" accounted for some phenomenal shooting at ranges of 2000 plus yards during World War II. Against enemy positions, personnel, and unarmored vehicles the air-cooled Brownings were considered indispensable. Following the invasion of Fortress Europe when long range shooting requirements became greater than they had been in the Pacific, German forces developed a healthy respect for the .50s.

Based on its single shot capability in conjunction with telescopic sight, utilization of the air-cooled .50 Browning in a sniping capacity (to supplement long range limitations of existing .30 caliber sniping rifles), was officially considered late in World War II and again when United States Forces became involved in Korea a few years later.

Unsuited as they were, ground .50s were employed in Korea with marginal



success for sniping purposes. This depended, of course, on what constituted effective sniping, which in itself was a subject of considerable opinion difference within the military establishment through the years.

Nevertheless, frequent use entailed placing two .50s at separate points, firing single shots simultaneously at the same target. This doubled the probability of a hit while confusing the enemy as to the weapon's position. As a long range weapon, the .50 was found to be invaluable for enfilading enemy trenches.

The First Marine Division included instruction in the use of the .50 in its sniper training program in Korea. Major Norman W. Hicks USMC, citing this activity, related:

Each student trained not only with the .30 caliber M1 rifle (or the 03 Springfield, depending upon his preference) (Ed. Note: M1C or 03A1 with Unertl scope), but also with the .50 caliber machine gun, fired single shot. Scopes were mounted on the machine guns and they proved to be effective for ranges up to and beyond 1200 yards.

Unquestionably, the most innovative application of .50 caliber sniping weapons in Korea involved adaptation of World War II vintage British and Russian anti-tank rifles by imaginative Ordnance personnel.

An Army Ordnance officer serving in Korea in 1951, Capt. William S. Brophy, observed that issue sniping rifles were in a poor state of first and higher echelon maintenance. Investigation disclosed that no special use was being made of the sniper's rifles, that the individuals

**Boys anti-tank rifle manufactured in Canada in 1943 by John Inglis Co., fitted with .50 caliber Browning machine gun barrel. Similar conversions have become popular among long-range shooting buffs in recent years. (Photo credit: Lt. Col. F.B. Conway, AUS Ret.)**

who had been issued the rifles were not properly trained in their use, and that the rifles presented maintenance problems which Ordnance personnel were unable to handle because of a lack of spare parts.

Capt. Brophy, who had served in the Pacific Theater as an infantry officer during World War II, was aware of the inadequacy of the arms issued for sniping purposes. Therefore, in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of sniping when a trained rifleman and good equipment were employed, Brophy procured, at his personal expense, a commercial Winchester Model 70, .30-caliber target rifle fitted with a 10X telescopic sight. Following numerous demonstrations by Brophy and others instructed in its use, the effectiveness of the Winchester was clearly evident.

However, targets were frequently observed beyond the range considered maximum for .30 caliber accuracy. Therefore, Brophy, drawing on his extensive shooting experience, had a .50 caliber aircraft machine gun barrel assembled to a Soviet PTRD 14.5mm anti-tank rifle. A butt rest and bipod were fitted and a 20X Unertl telescopic sight was mounted on the receiver.

Using issue .50 caliber ammunition, Capt. Brophy and individuals instructed by him in the use of the weapon demonstrated its effectiveness at ranges between 1000 and 2000 yards, rendering more than a few Red soldiers *hors de combat*.

Field conditions in Korea did not permit extensive testing of the weapons so employed. Consequently, it was considered desirable to conduct accuracy tests of these weapons using the MID rifle, .50 caliber M2 Heavy Barrel machine gun, and .30 caliber commercial rifles as controls in order to obtain a comparison of the effectiveness of each.

The results, conclusions, and recommendations of these tests, conducted

under the auspices of the Development and Proof Services, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, from December 2, 1953 to June 20, 1954, are:

#### Description Of Materiel

##### A. Weapons

1. Rifle, Caliber .50 Sniper. This weapon is a rotating-bolt action, single-shot shoulder weapon equipped with bipod and stock rest. Two barrels were used in this test. One was from a Browning caliber .50 M3 aircraft machine gun. The rifle consists of the receiver group, trigger assembly, and stock from the Soviet 14.5mm PTRD-1941 anti-tank rifle. The receiver group was altered to accommodate the caliber .50 M2 ball cartridge. An adjustable rest from a 57mm recoilless rifle was added for butt-stock support and elevation adjustment.

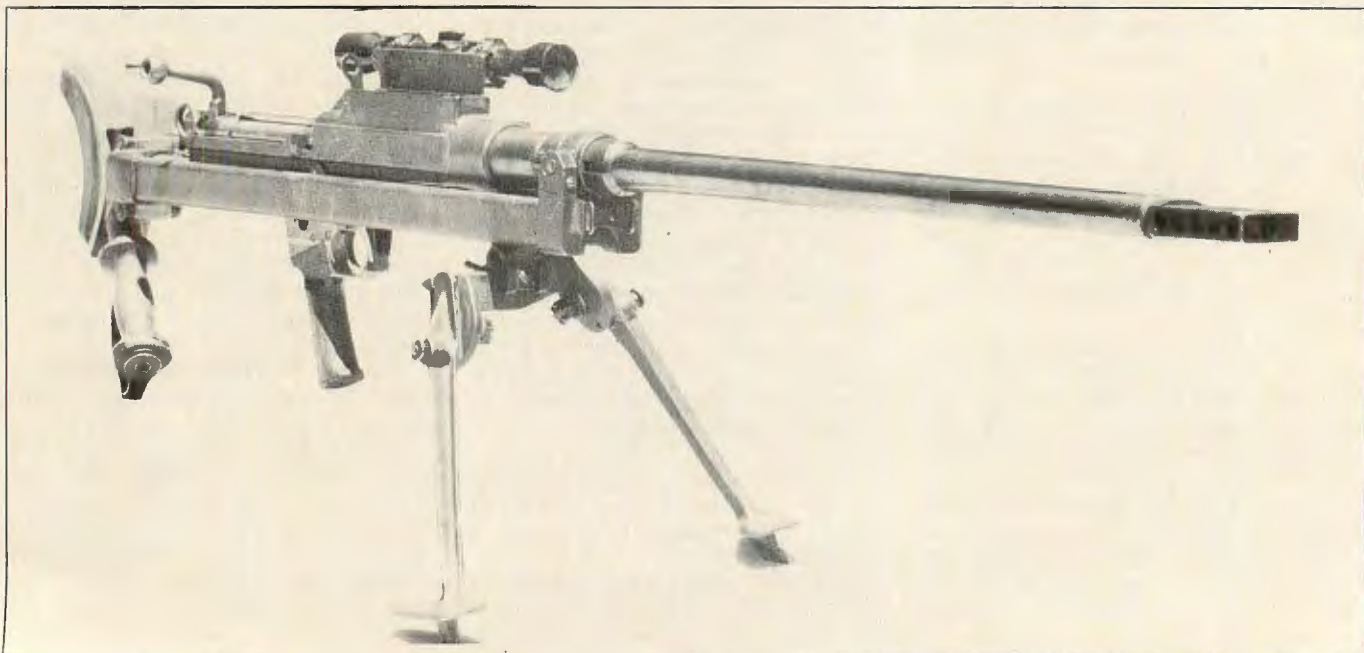
2. Rifle, Caliber .30 MID. This is the standard, gas-operated, semi-automatic, clip-feed shoulder weapon equipped with the M84 telescope and used for sniping.

3. Gun, Machine, Caliber .50, Browning, M2, Heavy Barrel, Flexible. This weapon is an automatic, recoil-operated, belt-fed, air-cooled machine gun.

4. Rifle, Winchester, Caliber .30, M70 Sniper, serial no. 254544. This weapon is equipped with a modified Mauser-type rotating-bolt action, heavy barrel, trigger mechanism providing an adjustable trigger pull, an integral box-type magazine, and sporter stock.

5. Rifle, Winchester, Caliber .30, M70 National Match. This is a commercial match rifle and is equipped with the same trigger assembly, magazine, and rotating-bolt action used in the M70 Winchester Sniper rifle described above. It differs from the M70 Sniper rifle in weight of barrel and in being equipped with the heavier, target-type stock.

6. Rifle, Winchester, Caliber .30, M70 Bull Gun. This rifle differs from the M70





**.50 caliber Flechette Rifle developed in 1969 for use against enemy personnel in Southeast Asia. Boys AT-rifle action, smoothbore barrel, Weatherby telescope formed nucleus of this unique weapon. (Photo credit: Donald Stoehr.)**

National Match Rifle only in that it is equipped with a longer, heavier barrel.

#### B. Ammunition

1. Cartridge, Armor Piercing, Caliber .30 M2, Lot FA895. This ammunition was used with the caliber .30 M1D rifle.
2. Cartridge, Ball, Caliber .50 M2, Lot WRA22405. This ammunition was used in tests involving the Caliber .50 Sniper Rifle and the .50 M2 heavy-barrel machine gun.
3. Cartridge, Remington, Caliber .30 Palma Match, Lot C238157. This cartridge, using a 180-grain, metal-cased, boat-tailed bullet, was used in tests involving all three Winchester rifles mentioned in this report.
4. Cartridge, Peters, Caliber .30 Match, Lot A23D2. This cartridge, using a 180-grain, metal-cased, boat-tailed bullet, was used in a 1400-yard accuracy test of the Winchester M70 Bull Gun.
5. Cartridge, Caliber .30, hand-loaded. This cartridge was specially loaded with 53 grains of 1MR 4350 smokeless powder and a Sierra 150-grain boat-tailed bullet. It was used in a 1400-yard accuracy test of the Winchester M70 Bull Gun.

#### DETAILS OF TEST

##### A. Procedure

1. To obtain data allowing comparison of their inherent accuracies, the M1D rifle and three Model 70 Winchester rifles, differing in stock dimensions and weight of barrel, were fired at a range of 100 yards using metallic sights with post front sights. The 10-inch bull's-eye of the "A" target provided a distant point of aim. After sighting in, the 10-shot groups were fired from each weapon using a bench rest followed by two 10-shot groups fired from each weapon from the prone position using a sling. During the record firing, sight settings remained unchanged in order that any change in the center of impact could be determined.
2. To determine the magnitude of any

error which might exist because of the use of metallic sights, the Winchester M70 Sniper Rifle and M1D rifle were fired according to the procedure set forth above, using telescopic sights.

3. To compare the performance of the M1D rifle, the Winchester M70 Sniper Rifle, and the Caliber .50 Sniper Rifle with respect to accuracy when fired at clearly distinguished targets at gradually increased ranges, the following procedure was used.

A. Four 10-shot groups were fired from each weapon at a range of 300 yards using the bull's-eye of the "A" target on the aiming point. The caliber .30 rifles were fired from the bench rest. The caliber .50 Sniper Rifle was fired from the prone position employing bipod and butt rest for support.

Both heavy and light barrel versions of the weapon were tested for comparison of accuracy. Telescopic sights were used on all weapons tested.

B. The M1D rifle, Winchester M70 Sniper Rifle, and the light-barrel version of the caliber .50 Sniper Rifle were fired to obtain one 10-shot group per day per weapon on a "B" target at 600 yards range. In testing each weapon, one target was superimposed on another, the first being removed, recorded, and replaced by another every 10 rounds. The second target remained in place to record the full 50-shot group. Before firing each day, the bore was wiped out with a clean patch. No fouling or sighting shots were used once the initial targets were fired. Each hole on the target was num-

### 1000-YARD TEST

#### Trial Measurements

##### Rifle, Caliber .30 M1D

Trial No.	Mean Radius	Mean Vertical	Mean Horizontal	Extreme Vertical	Extreme Horizontal	Extreme Spread
1	11.5	7.6	7.1	39.4	36.5	40.4
2	21.6	13.4	13.9	62.0	63.3	77.4
3	One shot missed the 12 x 12 ft. panel					
4	19.6	16.0	8.1	71.0	40.4	71.8
5	20.4	12.6	15.3	46.2	58.2	69.4

##### Rifle, Winchester M70 Sniper

1	10.4	5.1	7.6	23.9	27.6	27.6
2	8.5	5.3	4.8	26.4	19.5	25.3
3	12.8	11.4	5.2	36.2	29.1	36.7
4	11.4	7.1	7.9	31.7	29.9	39.2
5	13.1	10.1	5.5	39.8	24.6	40.1

##### Rifle, Caliber .50 Sniper, Light Barrel

1	13.7	8.7	8.6	30.3	37.6	37.8
2	22.2	13.6	15.6	39.3	55.1	61.6
3	20.6	14.1	13.0	74.4	48.4	64.8
4	21.4	16.4	8.7	66.2	38.0	60.0
5	14.8	10.5	7.8	43.3	58.8	45.9

Test at 1000 yards. One 10-shot group was fired from each rifle on each of the five days. A composite target of five day's firing of each weapon was made by superimposing the targets to contain the daily 10-shot groups over the target recording the 50-round group produced by the total of five trials. Telescopic sights were used on all rifles. The caliber .30 rifles were fired from a bench rest, and the caliber .50 rifle from the prone position using bipod and butt rest. Target measurements are given in inches.

bered, and the vertical and horizontal distance from the center of the target were recorded. Sights and aiming point remained undisturbed during the test. Telescopic sights were used on all weapons.

C. The procedure followed in paragraph 3A was repeated with the exception that the range was increased to 1000 yards, a "C" target replaced the "B" target, and only the light barrel was employed with the Caliber .50 Sniper Rifle.

4. To determine the dispersion characteristics of the Browning caliber .50 M2 heavy-barrel machine gun when fired single shot on a clearly defined aiming point, two series of four 10-shot groups were fired—the first using telescopic sights and the second using metallic sights. The "A" target was used at a range of 300 yards.

5. To determine its effectiveness under conditions of sighting similar to those met in combat, the Browning caliber .50 M2 heavy-barrel machine gun was fired single shot at man-sized silhouette targets mounted on a large background, colored to provide contrast simulating that of a soldier uniformed to blend with the terrain.

A. The first of two tests of this type was conducted with the type "E" silhouette target mounted on a background 8x8 ft. stationed at 1000 yards. Ten rounds were fired for sighting; 50 rounds were fired for record using the standard metallic sights. The procedure was then duplicated employing telescopic sights.

B. In the second test, the range was increased to 1400 yards and the background size was increased proportionally to 12x12 ft. Ten rounds were used for sighting and 50 rounds were fired for record. Telescopic sights were employed in this test.

6. In order to establish the extreme range at which a satisfactory number of hits might be expected on a man-size

**.50 caliber sniper rifle used by Capt. William S. Brophy to reach targets beyond limits of .30 caliber accuracy. (Photo credit: U.S. Army.)**

## 600-YARD TEST

### Target Measurements

#### Rifle, U.S. Caliber .30 M1D

Trial No.	Mean Radius	Mean Vertical	Mean Horizontal	Extreme Vertical	Extreme Horizontal	Extreme Spread
1	10.1	5.8	7.1	27.3	25.4	30.0
2	14.1	6.5	11.8	25.2	45.3	47.0
3	9.2	5.3	5.7	30.1	26.2	30.5
4	12.4	6.8	9.0	31.0	39.9	41.3
5	11.3	7.6	6.7	29.0	25.0	35.4

#### Rifle, Winchester M70 Sniper

1	5.4	3.0	4.0	11.7	13.6	17.4
2	6.7	3.9	5.0	15.1	13.4	18.0
3	4.5	2.2	3.5	9.5	12.8	12.8
4	5.7	2.8	4.0	10.9	23.2	23.4
5	4.0	2.9	2.3	8.3	9.5	11.7

#### Rifle, Caliber .50 Sniper, Light Barrel

1	7.1	4.7	4.5	15.1	19.2	19.7
2	8.1	7.3	5.0	31.7	10.1	31.7
3	7.3	3.9	5.5	12.8	29.0	29.0
4	8.3	4.4	6.7	20.8	23.2	31.2
5	12.2	6.1	9.5	21.9	33.5	33.9
5	12.2	6.1	9.5	21.9	33.5	33.9

Test at 600 yards. One 10-shot group was fired by each rifle on each of five days. A target containing composite of five groups was produced simultaneously for each rifle. The caliber .30 rifles were fired from a bench rest and the caliber .50 rifle from the prone position using bipod and butt rest. Telescopic sights were used with each weapon. Target measurements are given in inches.

target from the accurate caliber .30 rifle, 60 rounds of match-quality ammunition were fired from the Winchester Model 70 Bull Gun at an "E" type silhouette mounted as in paragraph 5B, and stationed at 1400 yards. The weapon was fired from a bench rest employing telescopic sights.

### OBSERVATIONS

1. The caliber .50 Sniper Rifle was first tested for accuracy at 300 yards using the barrel from the caliber .50 M3 aircraft machine gun (hereafter called the light barrel).

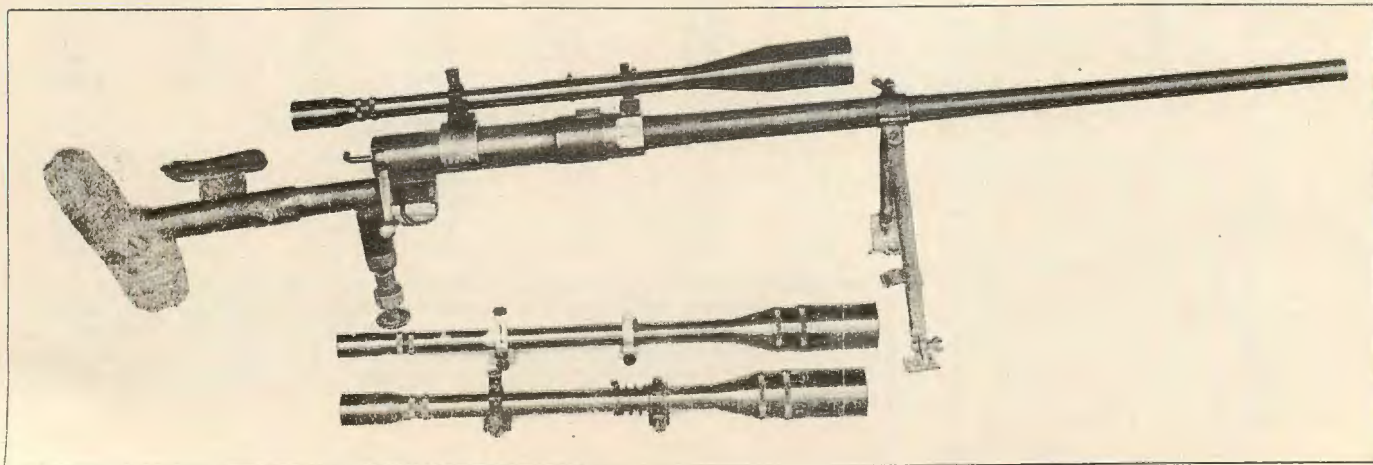
A. The comparison of results after this barrel was replaced by a barrel from the caliber .50 M2 heavy barrel machine gun shows the heavy barrel version capable of producing a group having approximately one half the extreme spread of that from the light

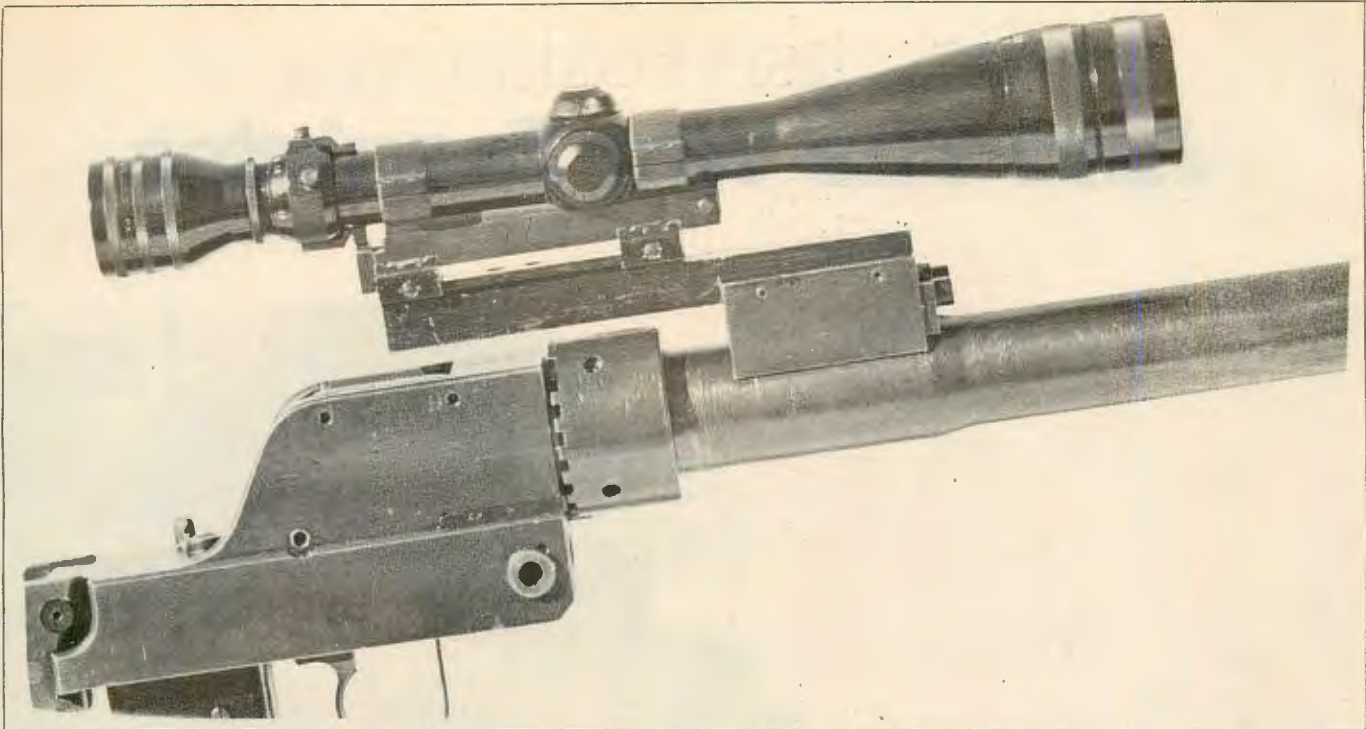
barrel. The loss of accuracy caused by use of the light barrel might be attributed to its chrome-plated stellited bore.

B. The groups fired from the heavy-barrel weapon have an extreme spread approximately two-thirds the size of those using the caliber .30 M1D rifle, a control weapon in this test. They are comparable at this range to those fired from the Winchester M70 Sniper Rifle.

C. There was no noticeable change in center of impact in the groups fired by the Winchester rifles. The M1D rifle, however, produced groups showing marked changes in the center of impact.

2. The light-barrel version of the Caliber .50 Sniper Rifle was tested again at 600 yards range with the M1D rifle and Win-





Although Improved Redfield 6×18 variable-power Adjustable Ranging Telescope (ART) developed by SOFer Jim Leatherwood was mounted on .50 cal. PzB for use in Vietnam, de-escalation precluded combat evaluation. Mounting ARTs on .50 cal. MGs was part of original concept developed by Limited Warfare Laboratory. (Photo credit: Lt. Col. F.B. Conway, AUS Ret.)

chester M70 Sniper Rifle as control weapons.

A. This test differed from the other accuracy tests in that:

- (1) Firing on the target was limited to 10 rounds per weapon per day, being completed when a 50-round group had been produced by each after five days.
- (2) A type "E" silhouette was superimposed on the bull's-eye used as the aiming point, and the number of hits within the area outlined were recorded.

B. The accuracies of these weapons were compared in terms of hits described above. The best, therefore, shows the effectiveness of the weapons under varying conditions against a clearly defined target the size of a man.

C. The results of the test show the accuracy of the light-barrel version of the Caliber .50 weapon to be comparable to the Winchester M70 Sniper Rifle and superior to the M1D rifle.

3. The above test was repeated at 1000 yards employing the caliber .30 M1D rifle and Winchester M70 Sniper Rifle as control weapons.

A. The number of hits scored by the caliber .50 Sniper Rifle fall to approximately half the number scored by the Winchester M70 Sniper Rifle, a result consistent with the findings at 300

yards. The number of hits scored by the caliber .30 M1D rifle was reduced on approximately 25 per cent of its 600 yard figure, only six hits having been scored of the 50 rounds fired.

B. Since the accuracy of the caliber .50 Sniper Rifle with the heavy barrel compared favorably with that of the Winchester M70 Sniper Rifle at 300 yards, it is likely that this weapon would equal the performance of the Winchester rifle at longer ranges. In addition to its accuracy, this weapon, because of its heavier projectile, had the advantage of longer range, flat trajectory, and less affectation by wind variation than a caliber .30 weapon.

4. The accuracy characteristics of the caliber .30 M1D rifle compared more with those of three commercial caliber .30 rifles manufactured by the Winchester Repeating Arms Company.

A. Testing these weapons at 100 yards with metallic sights showed the most inaccurate of the three Winchester M70 rifles to be capable of producing an extreme spread only one-half that of the group fired by the M1D rifle.

B. A subsequent firing of the M1D rifle and the Winchester M70 Sniper Rifle employing telescopic sights produced results substantiating the results of the above test.

5. The caliber .50 M2 heavy-barrel machine gun was tested at 300, 1000, and 1400 yards.

A. The first test at 300 yards with metallic sights produced groups with extreme spreads larger than those fired by the M1D rifle at the same range. The use of telescopic sights in the following test offered little improvement indicating that the wea-

pon's accuracy is inherent in its construction and in the construction of the mount.

B. The test at 1000 yards was fired using a type "E" silhouette mounted on an 8×8 ft. background. The tests were run first with metallic sights and second with telescopic sights. It was the observation of the gunner that the silhouette was as indistinguishable through the metallic sights as would be a man camouflaged to blend with the terrain. Aim was accomplished by aligning the front sight post with the 8×8 ft. background. For this reason, metallic sights were not used in the test of the caliber .50 machine gun at 1400 yards.

6. The Winchester M70 Bull Gun was fired at 1400 yards from bench rest at a type "E" silhouette mounted on a 12×12 ft. background. Three 20-shot groups were fired, each with a different brand of ammunition. Telescopic sights were used, and care was taken to fire only during a calm. No large difference in accuracy was observed between groups although the ammunition brands differed.

7. Since the data for the report were taken, a new caliber .30 rifle and telescopic sight have become available commercially. Based on the results of this report, it is believed that these items contain the qualities of a good sniper weapon more than those tested.

A. The rifle is the Winchester M70 Target model and is basically the Winchester M70 Sniper Rifle with a target-type stock replacing the sporter stock. The high comb of the target stock provides firm cheek support when a telescopic sight is used. This rifle is

(continued on page 67)

# Rhodesia Battles On...

## And The War Escalates

by Al J. Venter



Rhodesian para stick boarding camo (DC-3) C47 in full combat gear, ready for immediate action upon hitting the DZ. These

troops jump a standard T-10 type chute and carry combat load of 300 to 400 rounds for FN / FAL battle rifle.

**Contact! Immediate action drill.** Rhodesian Security Forces respond to terrorists' ambush by going to ground in K (kill) zone and returning fire. (Photo credit: Al J. Venter)



She was a winsome lass, not at all the sort of girl that one would expect to find in a hotel bar full of troopies in camouflage gear.

When I saw her for the first time she was engaged in an animated conversation, adding detail to a story about a recent farm ambush in which she was obviously involved. Several soldiers around her listened carefully.

Ten minutes later she was gone, having kissed the man nearest her goodbye. Heads turned as she left the room.

It was not the girl's more-than-ample body that attracted most of the attention; nor her very pretty features, all of which could easily have graced the pages of any glossy magazine.



Alouette chopper arrives at isolated airstrip in eastern Rhodesia to complete "casevac" (casualty evacuation). WIA was hit during clash with terrs from Mozambique just minutes before. (Photo credit: Al J. Venter)



Above right: Rhodesian Security Force dropped by chopper, as part of Airborne Strike Force, in fire force operation. These heli-borne troops must make contact or confirm terrorist presence before the paras are committed to action.



Security Forces set up FN/MAG position in southeastern operational area. (Photo credit: Al J. Venter)

It was the T-shirt she was wearing. It bore the legend: "Settlement My Arse. Lets Slot Floppies."

While this attitude does not typify the mood of a fairly large section of the white Rhodesian populace who already have five grim years of guerrilla warfare behind them, the fact that the shirt was worn at all in a public place at a time when Ian Smith is trying to accommodate the aspirations of Black Nationalism does not bode well for the future.

The truth is that while Smith and his ministers talk of handing over Rhodesia to a black majority government on the last day of 1978 to become the Republic of Zimbabwe, 10s of thousands of whites are asking the question: If the country is going to be black anyway, why bother about getting our butts burnt in fighting what is largely a black man's war?

Some of the views are even more bitter. Many of them reflect a hardening of white attitudes.

One 45-year-old veteran who was driven off his Mtoko farm with his family because of repeated ambush and landmine attacks phrased it this way while we talked in the privacy of my Salisbury hotel room:

"Everything I've built up over 20 years of living in this country—he originally

came from South Africa—is lost; my home, my farm, my stock. The lot.

"Now I work as an insurance assessor in Salisbury because it's the only work I can get and I can tell you I barely make ends meet because I'm still required to fulfill my military commitment which keeps me in the bush half the year.

"So when this lot collapses, believe me, there is going to be one hellova change. There are going to be a lot of people, like me, who are going to send their families down south and take to the bush. Then we'll show these so-called revolutionaries what a real terrorist war is all about. Only this time the terrorists will be white."

The man's views were not unique. On more than one occasion during my two-week visit I heard the phrase—"If we've got to give in then we'll go down fighting."

There are other changes to be found about Rhodesia these days.

A year ago when I landed at Salisbury International Airport all the customs officials were white. When I returned a few weeks ago they were all black.

It's the same in the commercial sector. Almost every shop in the bigger centers now has more black floor staff than white. In some of the larger supermarkets and

RLI para stick preparing for insert into contact area. Para stick, part of an airborne strike force, will jump in as blocking force, making daylight combat jumps from 100 meters.





Security on Birchenough Bridge south of Umtali is thorough. Bridge has become major terrorist target.

Rhodesian trooper, armed with Bren LMG converted to 7.62mm, takes break in the bush.

Armed with MAG LMG, Rhodesian soldier gives "all clear" signal.



department stores only section heads were white and even here, there are black faces cropping up.

One of the gripes most often heard from the younger set, especially those with jobs in banks, insurance houses, and apprentices is that while they don't mind some jobs being Africanized, they don't see why they, doing their military service, should lose seniority to the new black intake because they have to spend so much time in the bush.

Here too there has been agitation to conscript black white collar workers, as well as apprentices of all races.

Rhodesia in 1978 is a nation at war. And, as has been repeatedly said by several of the country's leaders, things are likely to get worse before they improve.

In cities like Salisbury, Gwelo, and Bulawayo life goes on, maybe not as

Athenaeum and Moth Halls, though invariably the proceeds go to one or other of the anti-terrorist funds. While I was there the Indian community chipped in with a Bombay Fete; in aid of Casevac, another military fund.

For those who are interested in other diversions, Salisbury nightclubs still proclaim their incredibly bad strip shows. Attendance by the boys from a stint up at the Sharp End are better than ever.

Generally, though, with a United Nations embargo as much of a reality as the war, the Rhodesians do marvellously with what little is available. Black African television content, for instance, pales before some of the offerings provided by R.T.V. While no color broadcasts are available, they have programs like the excellent Richard Boone Theatre, Bionic Woman, The Sweeney from Britain, the Muppets and, concurrent with its run



before, but the front displayed is a brave one.

Though most goods are scarce, I gained the impression that there are more imported and locally made goods on sale in the shops than there were a year ago. Certainly whisky—which retails for \$20 a bottle (or double the Rhodesian price in neighboring Zambia) is in ready supply and Rhodesian beer remains the best in Africa.

Heaven help the unfortunate foreign traveller, however, who needs major repairs to his automobile while on tour in Rhodesia. Spares of any sort are scarce.

In other respects the social pattern is much as it was before.

Tombola (Bingo) nights are still a regular evening event at Salisbury's

in the United States at this moment, Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. And the weekly Radio and TV magazine still costs only 10 cents!

The negative aspects can be disturbing, especially for some visitors for whom Rhodesia's war is as remote as Patagonia.

Like Israel, bags are searched as a matter of course on entering any building. The specter of a dozen people killed in a bomb blast in a Salisbury department store last year still hangs heavy on the heads of the guardians of the city's security.

Several restaurants and nightclubs are now fitted with elaborate security precautions which incorporate anti-grenade and bomb screens over all windows and grills

and, in one instance that I saw, a speak-easy-type hole in the door through which I was vetted before I was allowed to enter.

Another change is the number of gun-toting Rhodesian "troopies" who wander about Salisbury and Bulawayo in their off-duty hours. "They take their weapons wherever they go in the country," I was told by one of my contacts. "They might need 'em," he added perfunctorily. Special arrangements are now made at all hotels to check in the guns of prospective imbibers while they remain on the premises.

While talk in public places is generally guarded, it does center on the war wherever groups of Rhodesians gather socially. "Did you hear about Larry? Second time he's gone up, or Neville copping it out Karoi way?" Neville Royston of Karoi, a South African by birth and Rhodesian by adoption, was killed in a terrorist ambush on his farm on the weekend that I arrived in the country; he rated 43 mentions in the Condolences column of the *Rhodesia Herald* the following Tuesday.

Or you get the cryptic comment, in hushed tones: "isn't it shocking about the—family from Norton" and afterwards you gather that conventional guerrilla warfare in Rhodesia is no longer limited to conventional tactics. People are today being brutally mutilated during terror attacks, something which never happened before. Women, young and old, are also being raped and disfigured in a manner which is more reminiscent of Angola in 1961 than of a world seeking a solution to its problems in 1978.

Everyone in Rhodesia today has had someone close—a member of the family or a good friend—who can be numbered among the casualties; either dead or wounded. There is also the unpleasant realism in the number of permanent war maimed which are growing by the month.

While Rhodesia is a nation weary of hostilities, they are not yet downhearted.

Rhodesian Africans, to cite a simple example, have always reflected healthier relations with whites than their counterparts further to the south and this has not changed. But even they don't smile that easily these days for it is a common truth that for every white security force member killed or wounded in action, there are several dozen black civilians who suffer a far more brutal fate at the hands of the terrorist armies that seek to "free" them.

One of the waiters at the Monomotapa in Salisbury—still one of the best hotels in Africa—has not been home for three years. He hails from Mount Darwin in the north-east, a region that has seen half a decade of intense guerrilla warfare.

"What must I go home for? To be killed? That is for sure," he declared seriously when I asked him.

The man has two of his brothers living with him in Salisbury and admits that

(continued on page 74)



Rhodesian reaction "stick" on call. Note improvised butt stock on MAG LMG.

Rhodesian African Rifles provide convoy security.





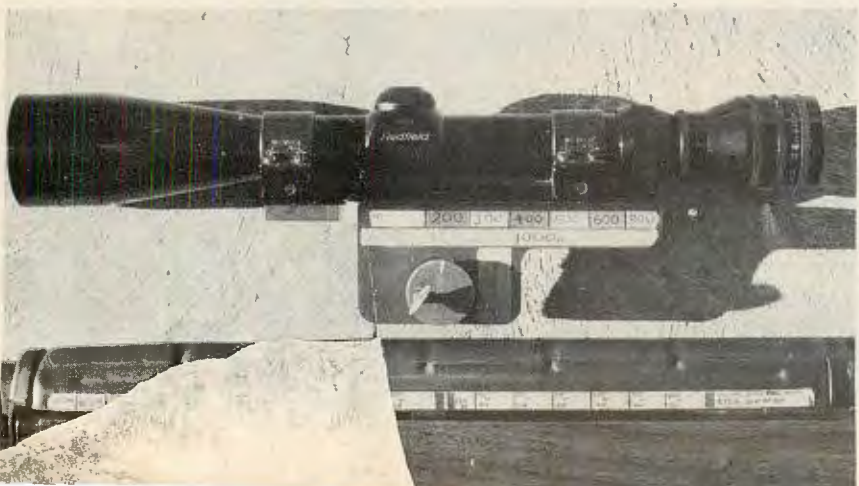
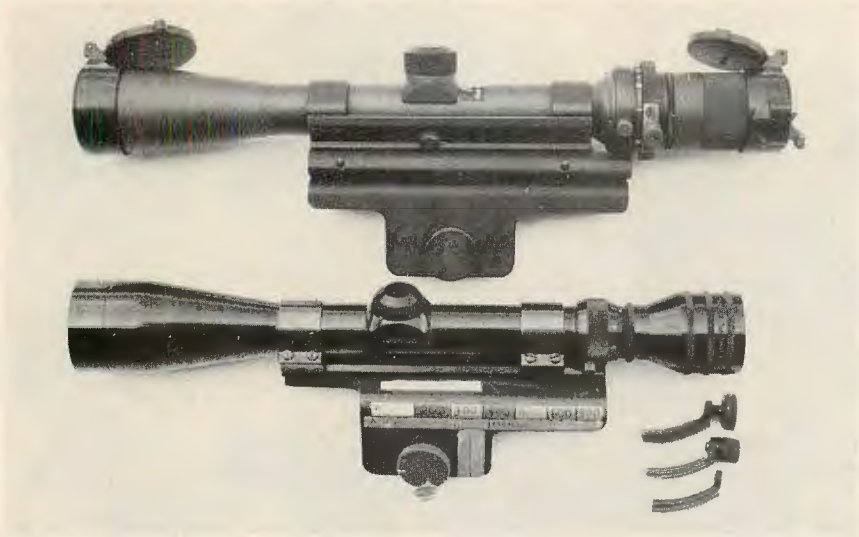
# Modifying The M1A For Combat

by Robert Sundance



ART and Redfield scopes. Note pop-open lens covers. Thumb screw on lower mount assures positive setting during

recoil. Iron sights are from top to bottom: modified variable iris, National Match, combat sight.



Left: Two modified M1A's. Top one for general use; bottom for combat.

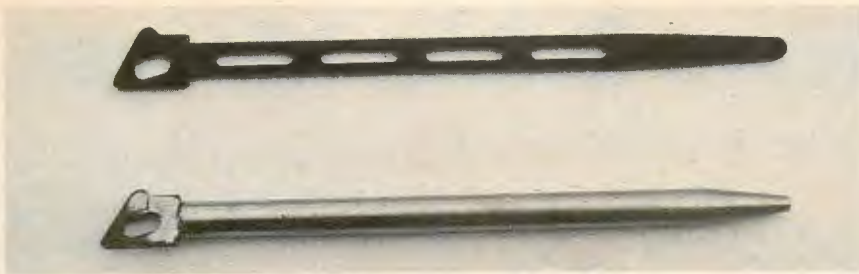
From 1957 to 1967 the M-14 was the main small arm of the U.S. Its "passing away" from active service to national guard units, to our allies, and to the military melting pot has ended the era of wood-and-steel weapons for our active defense. The military has many M-14s in storage for emergency use. However, the ordinary leg presently isn't trained in its use. Now it's plastic, tin, steel, aluminum, and fiberglass. No more wood-and-steel weapons. Hell, there just ain't no class to war any more. The purpose of this article is to refresh you "old timers" and educate you plastic and tin black gun boys to the M-14 National Match/Sniper rifle and to give some handy-dandy suggestions to those of you who own the M1-A (civilian M-14) from the Springfield Armory at Geneseo, Illinois.

I use my very nice shooting M1-A for match shooting, plinking, showing off, protection, and for hunting—using a five-shot mag. So this one rifle has actually replaced three others for me.

My rifle is a standard M1-A with home-grown improvements. The one military factory-provided difference is a government-surplus, epoxy-impregnated, high-grade walnut National Match stock. The stock's warp factor is almost zero and its durability is fantastic compared to a standard wood stock.

The receiver and trigger of this standard rifle are glass-bedded but not in the normal, stress-bedding manner which lifts the barrel when the rifle is assembled, exerting a consistent upward pressure. The rifle has a National Match

Author's rifle prior to heavy BBL. installation. Note range information for iron sights and scope.



Upper spring guide rod has had its corners polished. The N.M. round rod is heavier and helps prevent spring bind.

front-sight blade, and two iron sights for the rear, the first the N.M. peephole sight, the second a variable iris sight I had made up, using the standard combat sight as the basic unit, so that I can vary the light coming into my eyes. The scope is a Redfield 3 to 9, set on a commercial base with Weaver rings. Every screw on this rifle is Loc-Tite® sealed, using red or yellow paint to complete the seal. If the screw loosens, I can spot the crack in the paint. Sighting info for the iron sights is noted on the upper handguard and sight info (ranges to 1000 yds.)

color-coded on the scope mount, corresponding to colors I have painted on the elevation knobs on the scope—quick adjustment! A glob of bright yellow paint on the allen head screw in back of the front sight assembly allows me to locate the front sight quickly in poor light, when I'm using iron sights. I would recommend this to any soldier in combat. The rear-sight windage and elevation knobs are fully color-indexed.

I make sure that the flash suppressor is on straight and check it out regularly. I polished the gas cylinder and piston,



After glass bedding author used a piece of metal to hold trigger open 1/8 inch while glass cured.

Primary differences between standard barrel, which is the same size as standard N.M. barrel, and heavy N.M. barrel are very apparent. Heavy barrel adds about 20 oz. to rifle—a thought to consider.



Use of two slings allows for full freedom of arms for longer hikes in secure areas.

using 600 grit sandpaper, and enlarged the gas escape hole in the wood portion of the stock, protecting it against the heat of escaping gases by an epoxy coating.

The barrel is free floating, with the upper handguard staked to it and epoxied on, so that no part of the upper handguard can contact the receiver or the stock. In fact at least 3/32 of an inch is the minimum clearance for consistent accuracy. I applied 1 1/2-inch-wide, flat black, nylon tape to the top of the upper handguard to cut glare. A coating of flat black paint will also work. The upper handguard is set as far forward toward the front sight as possible. All interior wood areas and the complete barrel channel—including the wood end grain behind the steel butt plate—are coated with a thin layer of epoxy to further protect against heat and moisture.

(continued on page 79)

Note how white stripes on stock help blend in with bush in background.



# SOF Interviews Robin Moore

On 6 August 1977 Robin Moore, author of *The Green Berets* and *The French Connection*, opened what he called "The American Embassy of Goodwill" at 2 Ross Avenue, Salisbury, and a social club for Americans in the Rhodesian armed forces called "The Crippled Eagles." The Crippled Eagles, Moore said, refers to the "Americans who are trying in their own way to do something for Rhodesia, and against communism, despite official disapproval and at times harassment by the U.S. government."

The seal of the "Embassy" depicts the American Eagle with one crippled wing, signifying the U.S. government's attempts to harass Americans fighting in Rhodesia. This Crippled Eagle is perched on a red, white and blue shield. In its talons it holds an FN/FAL rifle, currently the standard weapon of issue for the Rhodesian Army and a quill pen, signifying the truth being told by the American Embassy of Goodwill about this war against communist aggression and terrorism.

Since its opening, the "Embassy" has become a focus point for many of the foreign volunteers now in service with the security forces. As Moore said, "Now we have an embassy, we have a center. Here is the beginning of an army of ex-servicemen from all over the western world."

"I say to all of them, come on over and join the good fight. All are welcome."

Recently SOF interviewed Robin Moore at his Connecticut office.

**SOF:** We noticed from your press release, "background to Ross Avenue and the unofficial American Embassy," that you first came out to Rhodesia at the behest of General Yarborough.

**MOORE:** That's correct.

**SOF:** Why did Yarborough request you to come out?

**MOORE:** He felt that somebody should write a book that would help Americans understand Rhodesia.

**SOF:** Why were you receptive to his request?

**MOORE:** I'd been interested in Rhodesia ever since UDI and I'd been subscribing to their bulletins from the Rhodesian Information Office.

**SOF:** Incidentally, is that closed down? What are they doing?

**MOORE:** It's still going. I believe it's being privately financed now, but it is still operating.

**SOF:** You mentioned in your press release that you were linked up with Col. Vernon Gillespie. What is his background?

**MOORE:** Lt. Col. Gillespie was one of the most famous of the Special Forces people. He worked with the Montagnards.



nards. He was featured on the front cover of *Life* magazine. I think they had a two-part story on him. Also there's a tremendous story about him in the January 1964 edition of *National Geographic*.

**SOF:** Was that one the story that covered the Montagnards?

**MOORE:** Yes, the rebellion. He was right in the middle of it, he and Major Edwin Brooks, another very close friend of mine.

**SOF:** We had heard his name before but couldn't place it.

**MOORE:** Gillespie's Special Forces unit was associated with the CIA in their operations in Southeast Asia. That's one of his problems in Rhodesia. He is in no way connected with the CIA now.

**SOF:** How do you convince somebody of this?

**MOORE:** It's difficult. The fact is that he is not. I wouldn't have him working for me if I thought that he was. Besides, everything he's doing is the exact opposite of what the CIA, the United States, and Andy Young, who seems to be running the State Department on African affairs, are preaching.

**SOF:** Robin, now that you've mentioned the CIA and what they're doing: Do they have an active presence, as far as you know, in Rhodesia?

**MOORE:** If there is, we've never been able to isolate it. We suspect there must be because even though the United States claims to have absolutely no representation there, clandestine or overt, we suspect that the CIA has been in my house on some occasions. We've had a book of names of Americans fighting in Rhodesia stolen from the house. Fortunately, they're mostly in code that nobody would understand. Nevertheless, they were stolen from my house by somebody who was trusted by me. Coded records of Americans fighting in Rhodesia. Just who did it, I don't know, but I have a few ideas. However, nobody

was hurt by it because what they got was sort of second-rate records of guys who, while in training, may have gone AWOL and that sort of thing. They didn't get the real people.

**SOF:** What do you think the motive might have been? What would they do with this type of information?

**MOORE:** Probably try to harass them, bring pressure on them through families in the U.S.

**SOF:** Now, that brings up another question. We've been informed by some of the Americans serving in Rhodesia that their families in the States have been harassed. Do you have any knowledge of this?

**MOORE:** Yes! Indeed I have. The wife of Captain Jesse Hickman was not allowed to draw money out of their savings account by the State Department when she wanted to come over and join her husband there.

**SOF:** Where was that?

**MOORE:** That was in Pittsburgh.

**SOF:** That's incredible. On what ground?

**MOORE:** Because he was in Rhodesia.

**SOF:** Did she attempt to do anything about it legally?

**MOORE:** No, there wasn't anything she could do. She went over and joined her husband anyway. Ever since the advent of the Carter regime, the harassment has been overt in Johannesburg and in London.

**SOF:** What is the nature of this harassment in Johannesburg and London?

**MOORE:** Well, threatening to take away the rights of U.S. citizenship to Americans coming to Rhodesia. You cannot take citizenship away *but* you can take the rights of being a citizen away.

On the other hand, however, Maj. Mike Williams, a ranking American officer in the Rhodesian forces, had to renew his passport recently. He had been harassed about it while in the U.S. He decided to try to make a test case about it and went down to Johannesburg with another American to renew it.

There, they told the absolute truth. Yes, they were in the Rhodesian Army. Yes, this is what we're doing. And yes, they were going back to continue to fight in the Rhodesian Army. *And* nothing happened to them. They were immediately given their passports, because it is illegal for any agency of the government to try to harass Americans that are in the Rhodesian Security Forces.

A lot of people don't know this and they are susceptible to pressure. And you know that the U.S. government, through the State Department and other agencies, is doing everything in its power to try one way or another to make these volunteers feel that they and/or their families will suffer.

# Robin Moore's Speech When He Opened The American Embassy Of Good Will 6 August 1977

The reason for this informal gathering is to informally raise the American Flag over our informal American Embassy in Salisbury. We hope that this house with the American Flag flying in front of it beside the Rhodesian Flag will become a rallying point for Americans who in their own way are serving the Rhodesian cause. Today the guest flag is British in honor of Britons serving Rhodesia. There are many nationalities in the Rhodesian Security Forces and we hope to acquire a guest flag for as many of them as possible.

The seal on the door of what we like to call America's Embassy of Goodwill depicts the American Eagle with one crippled wing. This signifies U.S. Government attempts to harass Americans fighting in Rhodesia although there is no such interference visited on Americans fighting in other armies, for instance the Israeli Army.

The Crippled Eagle is perched on a red, white, and blue shield. In its talons it holds an FN rifle, the standard weapon of the Rhodesian Army and the quill pen signifying the truth being told about this war against communist terrorism.

All of us here deeply regret America's capricious and arbitrary treatment of this pro-Western modern industrial and agricultural nation which is host to all of us gathered here today. We are distressed that the new administration in Washington in its wisdom and perception of world affairs saw fit to insure the repeal of the Byrd Amendment and buy second-grade chrome for double the price from the enemy, rather than trade with a friendly nation.

As individuals we do everything in our power to make up in some measure for the burdens certain U.S. Government

leaders try to add onto the already troubled government of Rhodesia. In talking to the responsible African nationalist leaders inside Rhodesia as well as the European leaders neither black nor white Rhodesians see gain for anyone except the communist terrorists in American co-operation with British originated sanctions. Should we co-operate with Britain in punishing a colony for doing precisely what we did 201 years ago?

There are millions of Americans who either disagree with the Carter administration's position toward Rhodesia or do not understand what it is all about. A rallying point is needed which, with the aid of public opinion, can reverse the disastrous course being pursued in Washington. I hope this Embassy can become part of an effort to marshal and employ public opinion in the U.S.

The so-called diplomats who would solve the problems facing Rhodesia, and of course ultimately these are problems which will have to be faced in America, do so at a distance of 12,000 miles, refusing to visit Rhodesia or establish first echelon representation here. They do irreparable harm to the entire free world.

Unfortunately, as we Americans realize, a great tidal wave of irrational and mindless racial trauma has swept over our country, drowning reason and sober reflection in its wake. Because of the deep seated problems in America, exacerbated by racist rhetoric on the part of one of America's highest ranking diplomatic officials, it seems impossible for the American Government to perceive that the conflict in Rhodesia in the year 1977 is not racial, it is ideological. Will

a moderate majority government dedicated to democratic principles be formed here or will the Marxists, backed by Russia and China, and to some degree by the U.S., through the barrel of a gun bring their minority black rule? We have seen the results of the latter in Mozambique, Angola, and on the other side of the ocean in Cuba, to name a few.

There can be little doubt in any informed person's mind that were the United States to normalize its relations with Rhodesia, as it is doing with Cuba, even if Britain continued to hold out, Rhodesia, at this point in its history, would be in a position to solve its problems from within, among its own citizens, black and white. Such a move would be a great boost for the economy of both countries and insure that a Marxist, one-man-one-vote-one-time government does not come into power.

We are proud to serve in whatever way we can to help a nation with whom America, whether its administration realizes it or not, is inextricably bound in working out the future of the so-called Free World.

I believe I will serve best if President Carter relieves me as self-appointed ambassador and quickly opens an American Embassy with a competent Ambassador possessing a true understanding of Rhodesian affairs, not a biased or racist Ambassador such as the president has bowed to so frequently since he made his appointment to the United Nations. Until that happens, I will fill this glaring gap in U.S. Foreign Service representation in Africa and hope to make my observations here known from time to time.

An American I just visited in the hospital in Salisbury told me, "I don't want my family to go through any harassment if I die fighting communism here in Rhodesia. They (U.S. Government) will say I was fighting blacks for the white regime. I'm not, I am fighting communism."

**SOF:** Robin, if there were any families in the U.S. of individuals who are fighting in Rhodesia that receive any kind of harassment—what are their options? What do you recommend they do?

**MOORE:** The easiest thing is just to call a lawyer or call me personally or call you (SOF) because there is absolutely *nothing* illegal about this except the extreme emotionalism which has been generated by Andrew Young and the blacks of this country who have no understanding of the fact that what these American volunteers are really fighting for is a black representative government in Rhodesia that will not be like Idi



Author Robin Moore (center, standing in civilian clothing), self-proclaimed "ambassador of goodwill" for Americans serving in Rhodesian armed forces, presents "Crippled Eagles" plaque to American Major Mike Williams, deputy commander of famed, mounted Grey Scouts. Maj. Williams' career with U.S. military spans W.W. II, Korea, and Vietnam. He also saw action in the Congo. An ex-Special Forces soldier, Maj. Williams offered his services to the Rhodesian government. Soldiers in background are all Americans, each one representing units in which large number of Americans serve. (Photo credit—Verlin Associates)

Amin's. They are not fighting for the perpetuation of white racial supremacy, they are fighting for a Rhodesian government that will resist communist infiltration.

**SOF:** When did you first go to Rhodesia?  
**MOORE:** I arrived there about the 9th of August, 1976.

**SOF:** And how long were you there?

**MOORE:** Well, I've been there off and on until the present. I would say I have spent more than half of the time between my first trip and right now in Rhodesia. I spend about a month there and a month here. I do have to fund this operation. It's very expensive. I come home to make money and then go back to keep the operation going.

**SOF:** According to one of your press releases, you're going to have a book published on Rhodesia. Is that correct?

**MOORE:** It came out in November '77.

**SOF:** What's the title?

**MOORE:** Just *Rhodesia*.

(continued on page 77)

# In Rhodesia Civilian Ambush Protection

by Thomas McGregor

Personal security is an everyday concern for most Rhodesians, especially when on the move. Road-mining and vehicle ambush are two favorite terrorist techniques when on extended raids into Rhodesia from one or more of the safe frontline states of Botswana, Mozambique, or Zambia. The Rhodesians' answer to this challenge is a fast-growing homegrown arms and security industry in the best tradition of capitalist competition.

The internationally imposed sanctions against Rhodesia have given added impetus to a wide range of improvisation and innovation. Some of the efforts have proven successful; others have fallen before the cruel pressures of competition. As terrorists have a nasty habit of concentrating their attacks on soft targets, the lone farmer and his family at home or traveling within operational areas, the Rhodesians have concentrated on the development of arms that could be easily deployed from within the confines of vehicles.

Examples of their efforts range from a homegrown 12-gauge jumbo semi-automatic shotgun, the R76, a 9mm sub-machine gun, to the Mamba, a 9mm semi-automatic pistol. Each of these weapons systems has combined proven technology with innovation in the attempt to solve the personal security problems facing the rural civilian in Rhodesia today. They have also developed a unique method for employing small arms from a moving vehicle when it is ambushed.

## **The Ambush Remote Firing System: Rooftop armament to scatter terrorists.**

One of the newest developments on the market is an anti-ambush remote firing system which is fitted to the rooftop of civilian vehicles. Developed by Bob Hanson of Fort Victoria, Rhodesia, this system is designed to cope with "every conceivable" vehicle ambush situation, using most types of automatic weapons readily available to the Rhodesian (FN/FAL, the Uzi, and the British Sten gun).

The mounting is specifically designed to allow for rapid installation and speedy removal of the weapon in the event of being forced to leave the vehicle in an ambush. The system can only be operated when the ignition and the system safety switch are in the on position. Only then will the firing switch cause the rifles to start firing. The guns rotate at an angle of up to 210 degrees and the rate of fire can be adjusted from between four to 10 rounds per arc. After one completed arc, the gun will automatically stop firing, swing back to its original position, and then automatically begin the firing sequence again. This will continue automatically until either the firing switch is turned off or the magazine is emptied.

It is generally accepted that one should return fire immediately in the event of an ambush, but until now this has proven difficult to achieve from an enclosed civilian-type vehicle. This system enables one to continue driving the vehicle, maintaining proper control, while still returning fire.

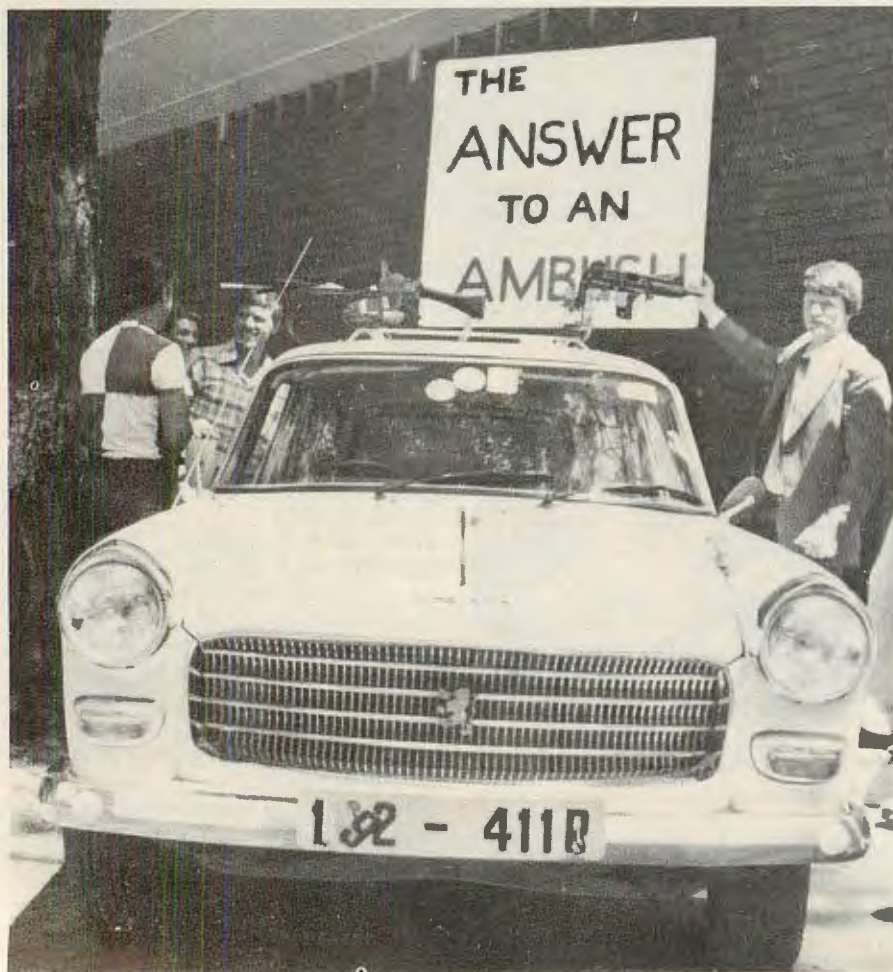
Depending upon where one fits the mount, he can either cover right or left, across the front or back of the vehicle, or down the sides. The ideal situation, according to Bob Hanson, would be to mount two weapons, one on either side of the vehicle to cover both sides of the road and to facilitate rapid removal. Alternatively, if the vehicle is not used in convoy, one weapon could be fitted fore, the other aft, to cover terrorists as one enters and leaves the K zone of an ambush area.

The system is currently being marketed to farmers, commercial travelers, and employees of business firms, who travel into the operational areas. It is also planned to be presented to the army, internal affairs, and police. At this date, Hanson has already received inquiries from more than 500 people who are interested in purchasing his system.

In the future, mountings will be manufactured for new Rhodesian weapons as they become available to the market.

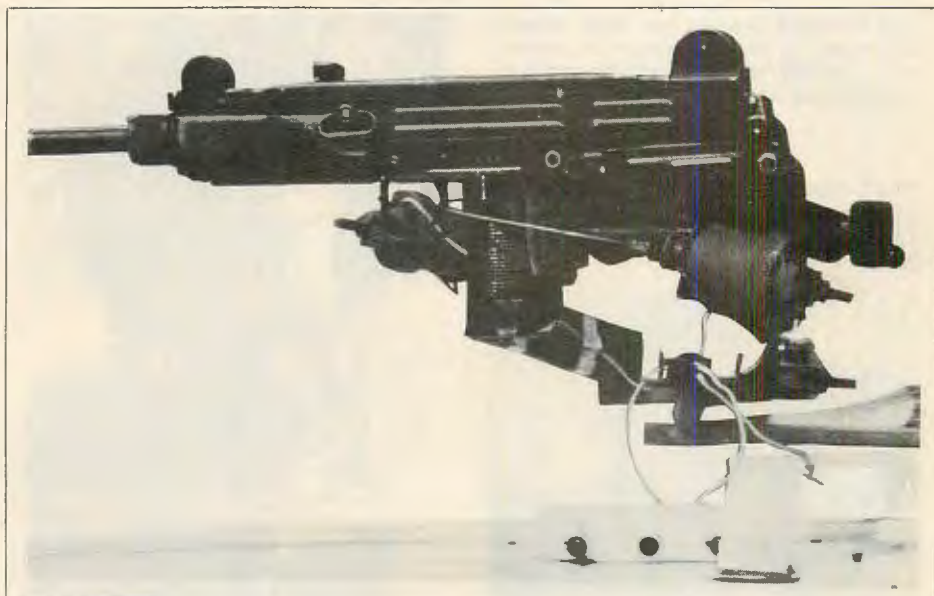


**The answer to an ambush: Remote Firing System developed by Bob Henson of Ft. Victoria, Rhodesia. This system is designed to cope with "every conceivable" (?) vehicle ambush situation, using most types of automatic weapons readily available to the Rhodesians. (FN/FAL, the UZI, and the Sten.)**



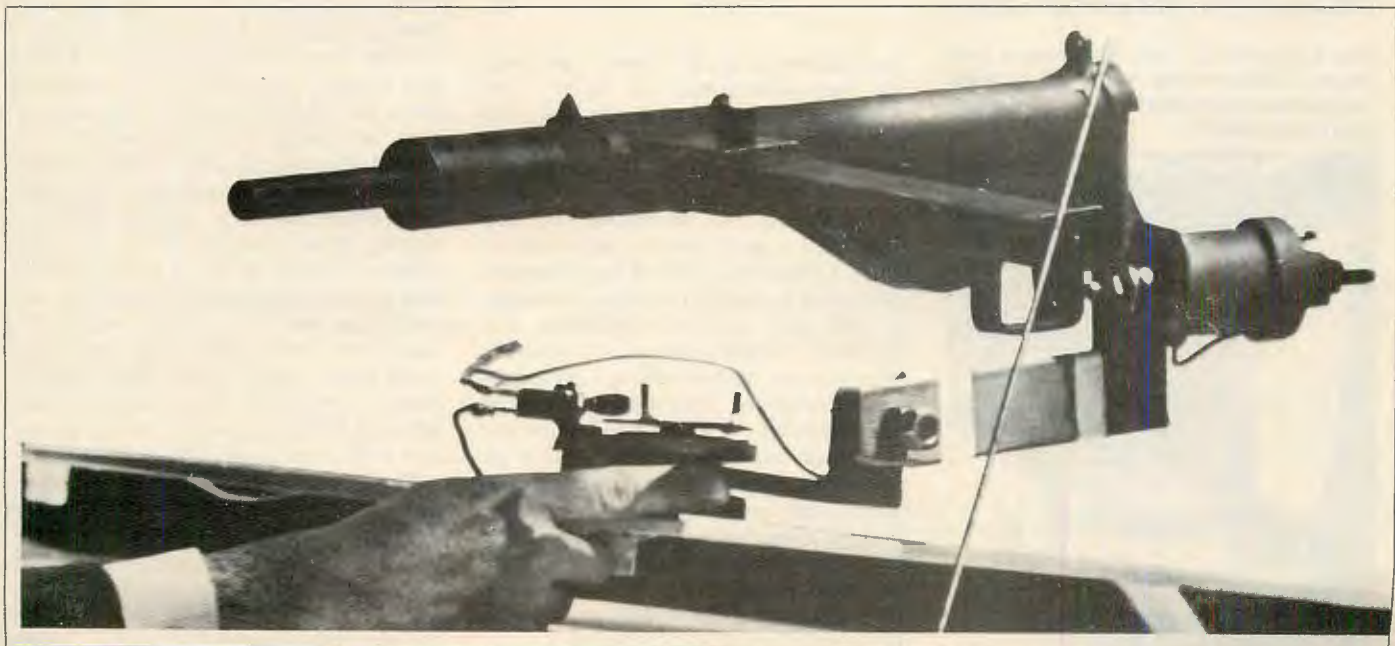


**Rooftop Ambush Remote Firing System with FN/FAL mounted in place. The effectiveness of this weapon system is limited, in part, by 20-rd. magazine capacity of the FN.**



**UZI mounted in place with Ambush Remote Firing System: note toggle switches normally mounted on dash inside vehicle.**

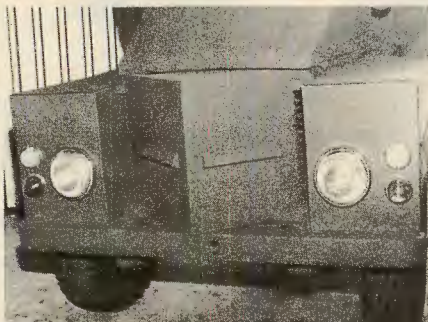
**British Sten mounted on top of vehicle, ready to activate. Firing switches are normally mounted inside vehicle.**





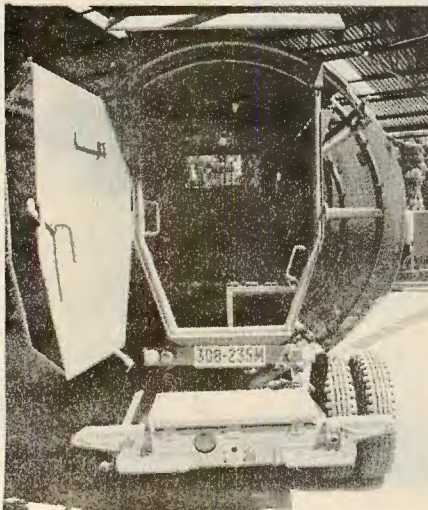
The Tusker's design has been heavily influenced by proven designs of military mine-proofed vehicles such as the Leopard and the Rhino.

The Tusker; Land Rover Conversion designed by N. Stipinovich, a practical solution to a very real and serious problem.



New, improved modification to protect radiator from frags and small arms fire.

The Tusker holds four passengers plus driver. Slatted seats with full harness seat belts are safe, durable, and "reasonably comfortable."



Roof brackets to fit these mountings will be custom-built to order. The price for the basic system, the electrical switches, and all wiring is between 56 and 63 Rhodesian dollars. Drive safely!

The system, as developed by Bob Hanson, is a good idea but falls short of being a great one. One of its important limitations is that each weapon is mounted with only one standard-sized box magazine, which cannot be replaced without exposing the vehicle's occupants to hazardous fire. This does not seem to be a major concern to the Rhodesians for, as Hanson readily explains, "based on experience, even if a vehicle were immobilized, one could still fire the weapon until the magazine was finished, by which time the terrorists would either have scattered or taken cover, thus giving one time to get out of the vehicle and remove the weapon, which is quickly done."

The system also has no arrangement to allow for selective traverse and elevation as the weapon must be fired through a predetermined and fixed arc and elevation sequence. Again, this inability to selectively engage one's target may be of no concern to the Rhodesians. If this is the case, one might just as well load the weapons system with blanks as with real bullets.

Another approach to the problem of vehicle ambush and roadmining has been the development of purely defensive mine-proofed vehicles. The military has developed such vehicles as the Leopard, the Rhino, and the Puki, a mine-detecting and mine-proofed vehicle, but civilians, until recently, had to be content with efforts at mine protecting the vulnerable Land Rover.

### The Tusker: Land Rover Conversion

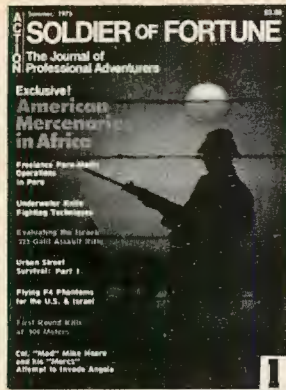
Now available to the Rhodesian who must travel within operational areas is a mine-proofed Land Rover conversion called the Tusker. The Tusker, designed by N. Stipinovich (Rhodesia) (Private) Ltd. of Bulawayo, is a practical solution to a very real and serious problem. While purely defensive in nature, the Tusker offers its occupants real protection from mines and small-arms fire.

The Tusker holds four passengers plus the driver. Slatted seats with full harness seat belts are safe, durable, and reasonably comfortable. Throughout the vehicle, emphasis is on safety through rugged quality. The heavy-plate V-section bottom is solid welded at optimum angles to give maximum protection from mine blasts to all occupants. The steel mesh skin of the Tusker combined with bullet-resisting glass windshields and side windows give protection against most small-arms fire.

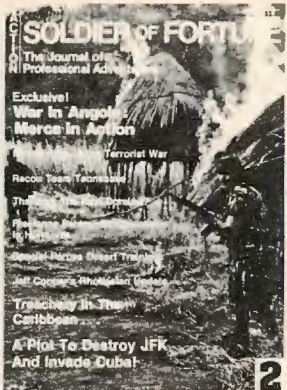
Minimum deviation has been made from original Land Rover equipment and that only in parts that are easily modified even in remote field workshops. Comfort and stability are achieved by extending the wheel base, modifying the suspension, and using twin rear wheels. The design allows for good mass distribution, insuring stability and ease of handling. Good all-around vision and excellent positioning of all controls with instruments directly in front of the driver leave him free to concentrate on the road. The tool box under the driver's seat secures the jack, tools, and other loose items that could cause injury if the Tusker rolled from the impact of a mine explosion. Reinforced roll bars provide added protection to the occupants of the Tusker.

The Tusker's design has been heavily influenced by the proven designs of the military mine-proofed vehicles, the Leopard and the Rhino, and it is probably one of the more practical innovations available to civilians who must travel in the operational areas of Rhodesia.

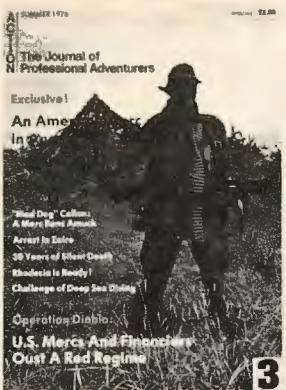




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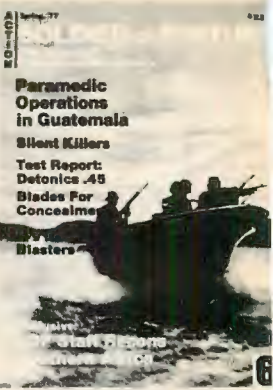
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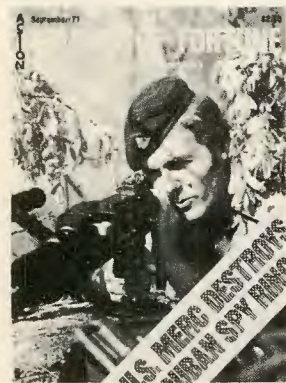
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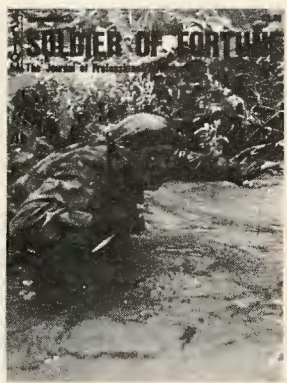
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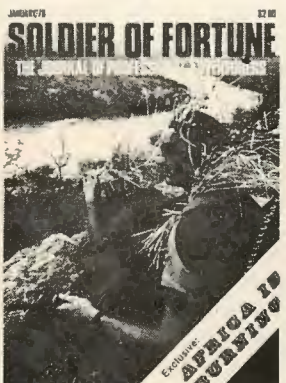
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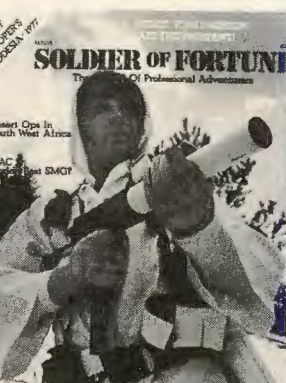
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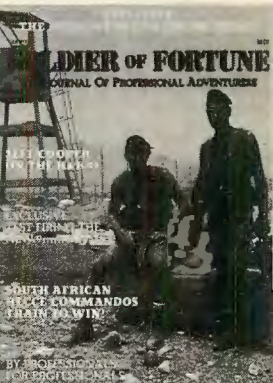
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(continued from page 33)

gees were crossing a road when they were hit by helicopter gunships which killed 125.

Observers who have spent time with Savimbi forces report that as a result of Unita's efforts, Cuban morale appears to be flagging. "The constant tension along roads which could be paved with landmines, the worry about ambushes, the sneak attacks on lonely Cuban outposts have taken their toll," one states.

Many Cuban reservists have been called up from the sugar cane fields, told they were going to Angola to build roads, and when they arrived in Angola, much to their amazement were issued AK-47s and sent to the bush. The Cubans have a language problem, have little or no idea why they are risking their lives in a foreign country. Because of the primitive road network, pay has been late and they have often suffered food shortages.

Savimbi's Intelligence sources have indicated that, like the Portuguese before them, the average Cuban is only interested in "getting out of Africa and safely home again." He claims that a number of Cubans have defected and have joined his rag-tag army.

Savimbi's friend found the enigmatic black leader in the twilight world of the Lungue Bungwe River almost exactly where he had been prior to Portugal's April revolt when he was leading his forces against Lisbon's army in Africa. Following Unita's evacuation of its joint Unita-FNLA capital of Huamba, in February 1976, these forces were obliged to take to the bush. Defeated by Castro's troops, whose tanks smashed through the last Unita strongholds, Savimbi and his men retreated in confusion to the South West African border.

Savimbi was offered a radio by the South African authorities at about this stage but he never returned to pick it up, I was told by a reliable source. The result was that it took months to bring some order to his fragmented force.

To find Savimbi today, one must follow Unita guides from the Zambian border through a seemingly endless labyrinth leading to the 1,200-meter Bie Plateau. This is forest country, crisscrossed by innumerable streams; "traditionally Savimbi's", my informant told me. In this vast region, where the Angilan population, there are 15,000 soldiers who have resumed guerrilla activities and are elusive as ever.

Savimbi loves the forest and knows its secrets. "He is constantly on the move, his Kalashnikov slung across his shoulder, carefully choosing a point at the forest edge where he and his men will emerge to disrupt the convoys passing between Luso and Silva Porto on the Benguela railway line. Apparently Savimbi is in good spirits—in fact he has seldom been so happy.



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"For," as Savimbi himself says, "beyond the ideologies, Angola is one country and some day the same nationalism will unite them all."

Savimbi, according to the Frenchman, has only one policy at the moment: "Kill the Cubans! Kill them all!" Unita policy is not geared against the MPLA who are even allowed to pass when groups are encountered on the road. The prime target remains "Castro's imperialist agents."

Savimbi apparently spends much time poring over his maps of Angola, spreading them out on his camp tables and marking them with arrows. All Unita operational maps are divided into three areas.

Said Savimbi: "The West is under the direction of Secretary General Miguel Puna; the center is controlled by Commandant-General Chiwale, and the East, my area, stretches to the Zambian frontier." His face becomes animated when he talks of Unita's victories, of the defeats and the communication and

supply problems which are very real in any guerrilla warfare.

Savimbi confesses that in the beginning, despite heavier losses, the MPLA did have the upper hand, "but they have never succeeded in winning over the population." Since then, Unita elements have remained on the attack; their morale is up and they now seek out and destroy ambushes; they patrol routes and harass the Cubans along what is termed the "Cuban Boulevard." The object, basically, is to "foster a sense of insecurity in the built-up areas and blow up railway lines. There are even occasional attacks in Huambo itself."

At present Savimbi has no forthright declaration to make, no message to put across to the world at large. His immediate problems are those of the "People's War"; of food and medical supplies and adequate arms and ammunition for his fighters.

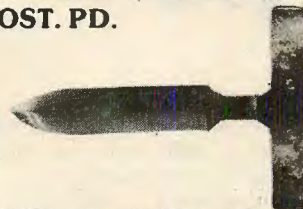
The Cubans, in attempting to destroy Dr. Savimbi and his UNITA forces, face a multitude of problems. The area in which UNITA operates is huge. Because of the rugged terrain and jungle, in most areas fields of fire are limited to 25 yards. The few roads, mostly unpaved, become impassable during the rainy season. Off the road, the terrain and bush preclude movement of wheeled or tracked vehicles. Safe areas for the guerrillas abound because of the terrain and avail-

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ability of overhead cover. the guerrillas can block motorized columns almost indefinitely with mines.

And a racial discrimination problem exists. Problems between the black MPLA troops and the Cuban mercenaries began in early 1976 when the Cubans began shooting MPLA officers who deserted when the South African artillery opened up. Cuban troops receive better food, clothing, shelter and equipment; Cubans go out on few operations, and therefore, their black allies are taking 90 percent of the casualties. When the Cubans do participate in operations, Cuban units remain in the rear, primarily providing support. Consequently, whole squads and platoons of MPLA soldiers have deserted to the UNITA forces.

Also there have been reports of Cuban technicians treating black farmers in a condescending and imperious manner. Some blacks have suggested the Cubans are developing a "colonialist mentality."

Cuban casualties continue to grow. No one but Castro and high Cuban leaders know how many Cuban troops have been KIA. European sources estimate that up to 8,000 Cubans have been killed. For instance, in one two-week period in January, UNITA forces claimed to have killed 98 Cubans. In March, a spokesman for the Cabinda Enclave Liberation Front (FLEC) claimed it executed 139 Cuban soldiers after the MPLA refused to release several thousand of its own prisoners. Several thousand wounded Cuban troops have been evacuated to communist bloc countries for treatment in order to minimize the possibility of an adverse reaction in Cuba. To date the bearded Cuban dictator has officially reported only three Cubans KIA since they began operations in Angola.

Western intelligence sources estimate there are 23,000 Cubans in Angola, of whom 4,000 to 5,000 are technical advisors.

More than one authority on Africa agrees that the turn of events in Angola could well result in the Cubans finding themselves in the same circumstances that the United States found itself in Vietnam, with the Cubans in the place of the American G.I. Time will tell.

1. Al J. Venter, *Portugal's Guerrilla War* (Capetown: John Malherbe, 1973).
2. Colin Legum and Tony Hodges, *After Angola—The War over Southern Angola* (London: Rex Collings, 1976).



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(continued from page 51)

lighter than the Winchester Bull Gun and, due to its shorter length, can be more easily handled. Based on the tests of the M70 Sniper model, the M70 Target rifle should be more accurate than the Winchester National Match Rifle.

B. The telescope mentioned above is the Unertl "Vulture" telescope. It features light weight, relatively high magnification and luminosity. Equipped with target type mounts, it has ease and permanence of adjustment. Basically it is shorter than the 20X target telescope and is less objectional from this standpoint.

C. Differences in ammunition fired in these tests may affect the results, particularly at long range. The ammunition used with the M1D rifle was the caliber .30 A.P. cartridge, while the Winchester rifles used a cartridge containing heavier, boat-tailed bullets. The latter has a flatter trajectory and longer range and is less affected by wind.

#### CONCLUSIONS

A. The following specific conclusions refer to characteristics of the particular items involved in this test.

1. Over the ranges included in this test and among the weapons tested, the caliber .30 Winchester Sniper Rifle

equipped with high power telescopic sights gave superior results, and is best suited against individual targets. It fired groups consistently smaller for a given range and number of rounds than did the light-barrel version of the caliber .50 Sniper Rifle. The caliber of .30 M1D rifle proved itself the least accurate of the three types of weapons tested.

2. Based on the accuracy tests made at 300 yards, it is apparent that the utilization of the heavy-barrel with the caliber .50 Sniper Rifle improves its inherent accuracy, giving it dispersion characteristics comparable to those of the Winchester M70 rifles. In addition, the flat trajectory, long range, and small wind deflection of the caliber .50 M2 ball bullet make the comparison between .30 caliber and caliber .50 weapons more favorable to the latter as the range increases.

3. The caliber .50 M2 heavy-barrel machine gun was found inherently less accurate as a single-shot weapon than the M1D rifle. The metallic sights, standard equipment on this weapon, are not adequate for aiming at ranges past 1000 yards. From test results, the maximum range at which a reasonable number of hits could be obtained using a suitable optical sight would increase to 1500-2000 yards.

B. The following general conclusions pertain to the general problem of sniper

equipment, of which some aspects have been elucidated by the results of the present test.

1. Neither the caliber .30 nor the caliber .50 cartridge possesses characteristics satisfactory for employment in a long range sniping weapon. The exterior ballistic properties of the caliber .30 are capable of considerable improvement in a practical shoulder-weapon cartridge, but the heavy recoil of the caliber .50 cartridge is objectionable.

2. Neither the M1D nor the various commercial and special rifles tested possess the most desirable characteristics for employment as sniping equipment, although the accuracy of the commercial weapons was superior to that of the M1D.

3. Neither the M84 telescope nor the various commercial telescopes tested are completely suitable for employment as a sniper rifle sighting equipment, the M84 being greatly inferior with respect to magnification and resolving power, and the commercial telescopes being of inconvenient size and too fragile for sustained military use.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

A. It is recommended that none of the specific experimental weapon-sighting combinations tested be regarded as suitable for adoption, but that cognizance be



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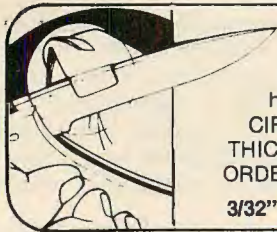
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taken of certain advantageous features of each.

B. It is recommended that consideration be given to the development of a rifle having more suitable characteristics than M1D for employment as a sniper's weapon, and that such development take the following course:

1. Development of a cartridge having exterior ballistic properties such as to minimize the effect of errors in range estimation and variation in atmospheric conditions, but characteristics suitable for employment in a shoulder weapon of practical dimensions.
2. An investigation be conducted to establish with reasonable certainty all of the important factors contributing to rifle accuracy in order that design of a sniper's weapon can proceed in accordance with well founded principles.
3. Consideration be given to development of telescopic sighting equipment having higher resolving power than does the M84, and more suitable military characteristics than have the various commercial telescopic sights currently available.

William S. Brophy  
Major, Ordnance Corps  
Proof Director

Interestingly, despite these qualified recommendations, as generally transpired with Ordnance reports intended to spur development of satisfactory sniping systems through the years, they were reviewed, filed, and forgotten by all, except by those cognizant of such a need.

Another significant application of .50 caliber sniping during the Korean fracas involved the use of Boys anti-tank rifles by the noted gunsmith, Ralph T. Walker of Selma, Alabama. The circumstances surrounding this use, though unofficial, are indeed noteworthy. Recollecting his .50 caliber sniping exploits, Walker relates:

I was assigned as small arms officer to the Nationalist Chinese Ordnance Corps in 1952 as part of the original M.A.A.G. (Military Advisor Assistance Group) charged with rebuilding the old Japanese arsenal at Taipei, Formosa.

As a matter of course, I had made several trips to the Nationalist held offshore islands. This was during the period when we had our own little war going on while Korea was in full swing. Things got a bit hot during this time, resulting from Nationalist raids on the Communist mainland. We were looking for a full scale invasion at any time. With only 250 Americans on Formosa, our concern was running high.

Just off Quemoy are two islands, one Nationalist, the other Communist. These were the outposts with the Commies' artillery holding the largest of the two. The Nationalist island, hardly more than a pile of sand, offered little room for artillery or its concealment. Heavy six-foot thick bunkers gave adequate protection,



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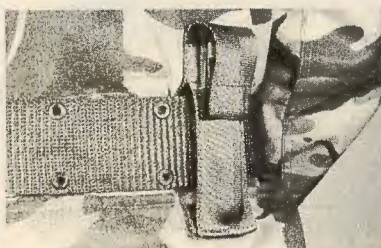
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but it was rather noisy with incoming rounds falling on and about.

The Communists could not take the small island as Nationalist artillery on Quemoy protected it. With a shallow stretch of water separating the two, it was too deep to walk, and too shallow for boats . . . a stand-off, and it's still there.

The 1100 yards between islands made firing with a .30 caliber rifle a joke, due primarily to the incessant wind blowing across the water.

With American guns pouring into the arsenal on Formosa, we were pressed for storage space. While inspecting the warehouses, we came across some .55 caliber British Boys, anti-tank rifles, undoubtedly used against the Japanese, but not one round of ammunition. Remembering the two islands, the idea to build a supreme sniping rifle using the big .50 caliber machine gun round to buck the wind struck my fancy. With a small machine shop and the help of Chinese Ordnance personnel, we built the rifle.

The barrel shank of the .55 Boys, larger than an M2 .50 barrel, necessitated cutting the existing barrel forward of the receiver ring, followed by boring and threading the inside of the remaining section—sleeve affair. The .50 barrel was then turned down and threaded to match.

After severe proof firing with loads made by pulling the .50 bullets and packing the cases with powder, we concentrated on smoothing out the action somewhat. Finding it necessary to load rounds singly, we installed a block of steel in the magazine well which served to strengthen the action and function as a loading block.

Although the Boys was equipped with decent open sights, for the shooting planned, a scope would be necessary. The first, a Weaver 330 from an 03-A4, soon shattered from the recoil force.

Among the leftovers from the Japanese were some 20X spotting scopes intended for tank use. These had fixed reticle, with external mounts, but could not be satisfactorily adapted to the Boys in their original forms. Consequently, we made up external mounts for the two inch diameter scope closely resembling those used with Lyman or Unertl target scopes, only double in size.

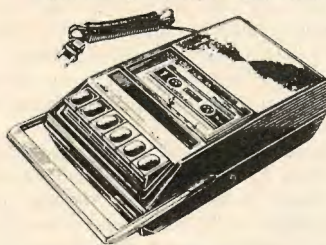
On a 500 yard test range the rifle performed reasonably well. We moved back to 1000 yards and went through at least six barrels looking to increase accuracy. These were machine gun barrels however, and were not intended for pin-point accuracy.

A .50 caliber round straight out of the box hardly qualifies as accurate ammunition. We found an amazing variance in both loading and bullets. In an effort to overcome this deficiency, we built a king-sized Pacific loading press, made dies, unloaded, and carefully remeasured the powder charges. Reloading improved accuracy somewhat, but not enough to compensate for the effort.

Although the Boys had a bipod in front and a monopod on the rear with a small built-in recoil system, it really rattled you to fire it. Three to five shots was about all a man could stand at one time even from a prone position.

The Nationalist Chinese became interested in the rifles and we wound up

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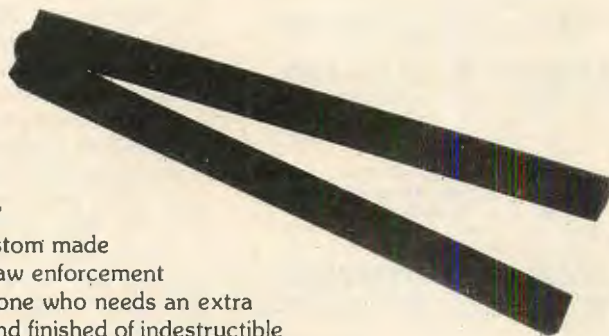
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building twelve of the Boys anti-tank guns into .50 caliber snipers. Picking the biggest and best shots, they put them through a training program with the .50's. While they couldn't equal the accuracy of the original test rifle, groups ran about two feet long—still adequate for what we had in mind.

About half of the rifles and their unwilling new owners were sent over to the small off-shore island. Although the front office would not let me accompany them, I read the results in a subsequent report.

On a usual basis the Chinese Reds would go down to the beach and bathe. At the first sound of any artillery firing at them from Quemoy, the Reds would scurry for cover and beat the first rounds coming in. With initial use of the .50 caliber rifles, their report barely audible, a dozen or so Chi-Com soldiers had their beach privileges permanently rescinded.

It is general consensus however, that the initial adaption of an anti-tank gun for .50 caliber sniping must be credited to the incomparable Lt. Col. Frank B. Conway (AUS Ret.). Assigned to a detachment supporting the Ordnance Board at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, in 1946, Conway was fully cognizant of the limitations of .30 caliber rifles, based on first hand sniping experiences in Europe. He considered the practicality of modifying an anti-tank rifle to provide an effective means for long range firing.

Possessing a PzB39 rifle, the type converted to grenade launching by the Germans after tank armor had proven too thick for their 7.92mm anti-tank rifles in Russia and North Africa, Conway, late in 1946, set about fitting a heavy .50 caliber machine gun barrel to his PzB39 action.

Following a full three days' work adapting the barrel, modifications included repositioning the bipod forward to the barrel end for increased stability, and the addition of a double-baffle muzzle brake much the same in principle

as those used with artillery. In place of the original iron sights, a 3x8 degree telescopic sighting device from a Wehrmacht tow gun was mounted over the receiver. With bipod and sighting system the rifle weighed in at 46 pounds. In its first use, Conway mentions, "Recoil was never a problem, but with that muzzle brake, ear protection was highly recommended."

Despite demonstrated effectiveness, little official interest could be generated at Aberdeen. At this point, immediately following the war, consideration of new innovative weapons, especially with regards to sniping, were of limited concern. In what appears to have been a chronic common problem with .50 caliber sniping rifles, Conway comments further:

Ammunition was always a problem, not because of a lack, but rather, its quality. Some bullets were misaligned with the case to the extent that when rolled on a flat surface, the nose of the bullet would rotate through a quarter to three-eighths circle. The fact that they could be fired at all speaks well for the big Brownings. I was fortunate enough to secure small amounts of satisfactory ammo packed in ten round cartons for the .50 PzB.

Subsequent testing of the modified PzB at Ft. Bliss, Texas in the early 1950s indicated positive results at ranges of 1400 yards. When fired at an adobe shack some 2800 yards distant, "we could usually place the second or third round through a small window."

While engaged in test and development of the Adjustable Ranging Telescope (ART) with the M14 rifle at the Marksmanship Training Unit (MTU) in Ft. Benning, Georgia, during the late 1960s, Frank Conway actively involved himself with the Limited Warfare Laboratory's concept of applying the ART to .50 Browning machine guns, in addition to the M14. Feasibility testing of this system was conducted, with Conway's .50 caliber PzB serving as one of the test weapons.

In adapting the ART, an early four by 12 Redfield variable, with an ART reticle and camming computed for the .50 caliber round at 600 to 1800 meters, was fitted to the PzB by means of a special mount.

Testing involved firing at an Army "E" silhouette target (19½ inches wide x 40 inches high) at distances unknown to the shooter. One individual, who had not fired the rifle previously, was instructed to fire three rounds, returning the ART to 6X between each shot as if searching the area for a target. Following this firing, examination of the target disclosed a triangular formed group (10 inches wide and 4½ inches high) well centered on the target.

Upon informing the shooter that the target was 1300 meters distant, his remarks were typical of those who had also fired the .50/ART: "Where in the hell can I get one of these?"

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Without exception, those who had participated in the test firing were extremely impressed with the first round hit capability and 10-inch groupings at 1300 meters.

As followed, the .50 caliber PzB was slated for field testing in Southeast Asia (Vietnam), mounting an improved 6×18 Redfield variable. As the reticle for the 3×9 scope was used, the horizontal stadia ranging lines were spaced at 60 inches, or double that used in the regular 3×9 ART. However, the de-escalation came about and, as Frank Conway put it, "So once again, the big .50 went into retirement."

Actual employment of converted .50 caliber anti-tank rifles for long range sniping in Vietnam remains obscure and, at best, highly unlikely. In general, specifics dealing with weapon use and deployment in Southeast Asia, owing to the proximity of final U.S. involvement with the present, for the most part remain officially shielded in lieu of the fact that virtually all weapons used there are still current issue.

Nonetheless, a variety of "special use" .50 caliber weapons, including the venerable Browning HB M2 machine gun, were experimented with and utilized by the Army, Navy, and Marine corps with varying success.

In 1969, under the auspices of the Department of Defense, Advanced Research Projects Agency, a commercial firm undertook development of .50 caliber Flechette Rifles based on modified Boys anti-tank guns. A total of 16 rifles were made-up including two prototypes. Weighing approximately 35 pounds, the Boys actions were fitted with unrifled smooth-bore barrels. The cartridge, a .50 caliber case with flechette projectile, gave a recorded muzzle velocity of 4500 fps (feet per second).

While original design intended use against individual personnel in a quasi-sniping role, its only salient feature was an extremely flat trajectory, since accuracy proved to be extremely poor. At 600 yards, a typical 10-shot group would be six to eight feet in diameter. On the other hand, at close range, the flechette round would defeat two inches of steel or two feet of concrete, but against personnel it was hopeless.

Unquestionably, the most effective, basic deployment of .50 caliber weapons in Vietnam rested with the Browning M2, Heavy Barrel machine gun, much the same as it had in Korea. The "Big Browning" saw most frequent service with conventional open sights, but various units of the Marine Corps were known to employ high-power telescopic target scopes with special receiver mountings. Perhaps its most sophisticated use came in conjunction with the crew-served night vision sight, the Starlight Scope.

Deployment of .50 caliber machine guns as a marginal sniping weapon by

the First Battalion (Mech.), 5th Infantry, proved particularly effective when their sniper teams were trained to engage targets out to a realistic range of 1000 meters using the AN/TVS 2, Starlight Scope and firing single-shot. Intended to bolster their sniping capabilities rather than to supplant the use of conventional snipers, in initial use, a Starlight-Browning combination eliminated its target at a range of 800 meters with a single round.

In turn, sniper teams so trained were charged with instructing Battalion gunners for the purpose of enhancing their defensive posture by increasing the volume of accurate fire during periods of limited visibility. The Brownings were fired from regular M3 ground mounts and, when warranted, at secured areas such as Fire Control Bases, from fortified towers 20 to 35 feet high, using special mounts designed to permit rapid changes in fire direction.

After many years and three major conflicts, the "Big Browning" continues to serve.



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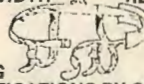
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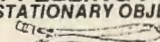
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# ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER

Three SOF staffers attended the NRA convention in Salt Lake City in April to evaluate the anti-gun legislation battle and check on what was new in the firearms industry.



O. F. Mossberg and Sons have two new handguns projected to hit the market soon. The first, pictured above, was a combat-ready .45 ACP auto pistol with a few features hardball users will appreciate. The weapon is made of stainless steel investment casting. It has a hooked trigger guard for positive grip control by the free hand, an ambi-dextrous safety, a six-shot magazine (plus one up the spout for a total of seven shots), barrel bushing for accuracy and protected rear sights. The Mossberg people claim it is the first auto designed by combat shoot-

ers and should meet the needs of those in competition or in the field with no modification. The weapon pictured was a tool-room prototype, so no testing was done with it, but SOF has been promised an early copy to write out for our readers. The Mossberg company is projecting availability of the piece in September or October. The suggested price of \$349.50 is not bad for a stainless steel combat ready gun.

The second handgun was a stainless steel .357 magnum revolver which is now available. Built on a "J" frame, it has a

five-shot capacity with 2" or 2½" barrel length. Mossberg says it will be offered later in 4" and 6" options. Weighing only 18 ounces in the 2" version, this potent little package is up for grabs at \$225. A .38 caliber version will cost slightly less than \$200. The version SOFers viewed at the NRA show looked well finished and should give the more expensive Colts and Smith & Wessons a run for their money. For further info write O.F. Mossberg and Sons, Inc., Dept. SF, 7 Grasso Street, North Haven, Conn. 06473. The gentleman examining the Mossberg .45 is the venerable Elmer Keith.

## NEWS FROM THE NRA CONVENTION

The National Rifle Association held its annual convention on April 14-19, in Salt Lake City, Utah. The previous convention in Cincinnati last year resulted in a turnover of top NRA personnel, with a mandate from the members to "get hot" on fighting anti-gun legislation. Thus, it came as no surprise that members were eager to talk again with their representatives at the convention.

The month preceding the convention, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms announced regulations requiring all gun manufacturers and importers to add a new fourteen digit serial number on each firearm to facilitate computerized registration of all firearms. In addition, all firearms transactions from manufacturer to dealer to individual owner were to be reported quarterly to the BATF. The information would go into a proposed computer system, allegedly without the individual owners' names and—but BATF Director Rex Davis noted at a small press conference announcing the new regulations that, using the existing Forms 4473 (the dealer-held form every gun purchaser is required to fill out), he "would be able to find the name and address of any gun owner in the U.S." in minutes. It was also hinted that the proposed system would be used in an

expanded, full registration system, although it "was not politically feasible at the present time."

Members of the NRA came to Salt Lake City to express their concern that the Institute for Legislative Action, NRA's legal watchdog organization, had acted far too slowly to whip up opposition to the BATF's regulations. Under administrative rules, the BATF's regulations could go into effect in 60 days, without first going through Congress. It is in fact law-making by bureaucratic fiat, which the present administration is apparently advocating in an effort to get around a recalcitrant Congress. BATF's action in this case served notice on gun owners that "regulations," using the vague wording of the apparently innocuous-sounding 1968 Gun Control Act, would be the order of the day, instead of suggested laws that might not make it through Congress. Hence members felt it was necessary for ILA to set up procedures to notify members of such actions on a far more rapid basis than has been the case in the past. It has become imperative for individual gun owners to work together, to form Political Action Committees to support the candidates from their own districts who are pro-gun. With the present administration's hostile stand toward gun

owners, it is necessary to insure that Congress supports the Second Amendment wholeheartedly, or the BATF will have its way and we will register everything—and simply wait for the confiscation schemes whenever the government feels strong enough to start. Remember the NBC show "Holocaust?" The people were asking each other in Nazi Germany how they could let such things happen to them. "But we can't do anything. We have no guns!" one of the characters said. They, of course, had said nothing when the German government decided to "fight crime" by first registering, then confiscating the citizens' weapons.

If you don't want it to happen here, the time to fight is now, not after the government knows who has which guns. Form PACs, contact your local NRA state representative, and ask for advice in coordinating your activities with other like minded groups. As long as the people are armed, an unresponsive government is limited in power. Power and law will reside with the citizenry. When the only weapons left are in the hands of the government and the criminals (the words are not mutually exclusive, as we have seen recently), the citizen is defenseless before both groups and is no longer to be consulted.



SOF staffers had a chance at the NRA convention to see some of the latest developments in sniper weapons for the U.S. Marine Corps. Above right are the unusual camouflage schemes displayed by their rifles. Top right is their desert camouflage, below is winter/artic scheme. The basic Marine Corps sniper weapon is the Remington 700 action in .308 caliber, with a custom Atkinson heavy barrel, and a MacMillan fiberglass stock. The present optics are Redfield 3x-9x telescopic sights.

Major G. M. Vanorden, shown in the photo above left, talking to SOF publisher/editor Robert K. Brown, informed SOF that the Marine Corps was in the process of testing several other types of telescopic sights for replacement of the 3x-9x Redfield. The scopes being tested include Weavers, Leatherwood ARTs, Leopolds, and Redfield Ranging types. Marine Corps snipers have other primary duties, sniping being a secondary role. However, the USMC seems to be incorporating snipers in

their permanent TO&E. Currently, 16 men in each battalion, usually G-2 personnel, are designated as snipers, coming under the direct orders of the battalion commander. The basic sniper school (experimental at this time) lasts six weeks, with the sniper instructor course taking four months. The instructor school and sniper concept development are located at Quantico, Virginia.



Austin and Frank Behlert displayed various modified and customized guns at the NRA convention. Several of them are pictured right (clockwise, from top right): Smith & Wesson Model 59, Star PD, Browning 9mm High Power, and the Smith & Wesson Model 39. The Star PD was the center of attention for most viewers. Behlert has turned it into a fine pocket pistol with a big bite. Modifications include a screw-in bushing, added finger groove, hooked trigger guard, an S&W K rear sight, funneled magazine well, extended thumb safety, and an opened ejector port. The object of the modifications was to make the gun quicker and more accurate for field/competition use, yet keep it as reliable as possible. Behlert Custom Guns, Inc., 725 Lehigh Avenue, Union, N.J. 07083 (201) 687-3350.



Browning's display included this new .380 pistol with a 16-round magazine capacity. Similar in all respects to Berretta's .380, introduced last year, the new gun has no positive production date and will tentatively retail for \$219.00.



Behlert's display included his new adjustable rear sights, now available for Rugers and Dan Wesson arms. They are also easily adaptable for Colt Gold Cup autos and Colt Pythons. They differ from the standard rear sights in that the entire rear blade holder moves with adjustment

(instead of just the blade as in other rear sights). Each turn of the adjustment screw moves the sight 20 clicks, for a total of 240 clicks elevation and 140 clicks of windage adjustment. The entire assembly goes directly on the gun without any drilling at all.



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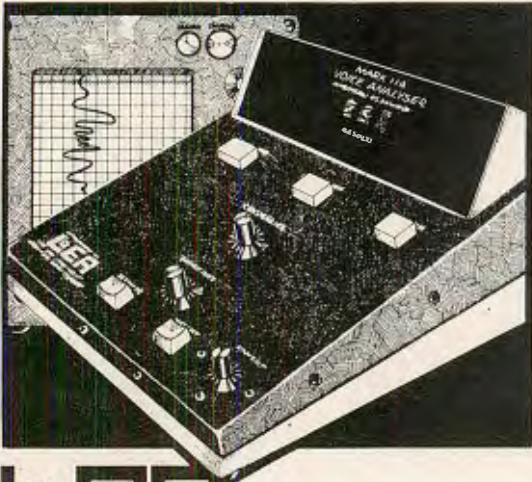
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(continued from page 55)

dislocation is preferable to slaughter. In his own village, he confides, there have been many killed over the years.

"Only the old and some children remain now. The rest have gone." Where to? He does not know.

Speak to the African staff with whom one comes into contact and, underneath the usually friendly devil-may-care veneer, one is these days able to detect a very real fear for the future. In Salisbury, especially, one senses that every Shona in the country is aware that Joshua Nkomo's Matabele nation is on the march. Word has it in Highfield and Harari townships that Nkomo, having dealt with the white man, will then turn his attention to his Shona compatriots.

At first glance this fear is illogical, since the Shona people (who, broadly speaking back the ZANU political movement) outnumber the Ndebele—who form the backbone of ZAPU—by about six to one.

Yet it is no secret, even in non-military circles that the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (Zipra), which is the military wing of Nkomo's ZAPU, is a far more capable, better trained and more aggressive force than their ZANU (Zanla) counterparts.

Operating mainly out of Zambia and Botswana, the far less numerous Zipra insurgents have, man for man, inflicted more serious casualties on the Rhodesian security forces than the Mozambique-orientated ZANU.

While the figures remain classified, I was able to ascertain that in the regions where Zipra forces are operational about two terrors are "taken out" for every casualty to a Rhodesian. In the east and northeast where ZAPU's Zanla is active, the Rhodesians kill an average of eight insurgents for every security force casualty. Both these statements vary with the wet and dry seasons.

One of the side effects of this new found development which is centered largely on tribal mores is that commercial enterprises in Rhodesia are now having difficulty getting their Shona staff to venture further west than Gwelo and Gatooma, a largely symbolic line dividing the two black nations who are traditional enemies.

Conversely no Ndebele in his right mind would accept a posting to the largely Shona stronghold of Salisbury.

The undertones of violence are already there and, for once, they have nothing whatever to do with the white man. And because of inter-tribal hostilities between the two groups there are many people in Rhodesia who maintain that a black against black civil war is not as remote a prospect as some would make it after 31 December 1978.

Already Zipra and Zanla forces have exchanged fire in some regions where

their territorial ambitions have overlapped. Beit Bridge and its environs in the extreme south is one such area.

Several interesting sidelights concerning the Rhodesian war have emerged in recent months. One of these is a cost comparison with Britain's terrorist struggle in Malaya in the '50s.

If all the additional budget appropriations are taken into consideration, one expert has worked out that it costs the Smith regime roughly a quarter of a million American dollars to kill a single terrorist. This figure is obtained by dividing the number of terrs killed with the amount spent on the war.

What is significant about this statistic is that it cost the British Government exactly the same amount to kill one Malayan terrorist.

In the war itself, the original operational areas of Hurricane (northeast), Thrasher (eastern border), Repulse (southeast) and Tangent (Matabeleland) have now been expanded to include several others. These include Operation Grapple (Midlands), Ranger (northwest border) and Splinter (Kariba).

In the present phase American sources reckon that there are roughly 40,000 security force personnel on active service at any one time (including police, who serve a para-military role, in any event). This pressure on a tiny nation like Rhodesia and the demands made on the individual is one of the reasons why 16,000 white Rhodesians emigrated from the country of their choice during 1977.

It is also true, however, that while there are more families planning to leave, it would appear that the initial rush is over. The majority of those that remain have indicated that they plan "to see it through."

One factor which continues to niggle the authorities is still the number of Portuguese residents who are not playing a role in protecting the country from subversion. This has been given as one of the reasons for tightening up call-up procedures; for while there are many loyal Portuguese fighting in the Rhodesian security forces, there are many thousands who have so far managed to successfully evade the net.

One of the sadder aspects of the continuing insurgent struggle in Rhodesia is that only a very small proportion of daily incidents are made public.

During my own brief sojourn in the country last February there were numerous hostile acts in my immediate vicinity which were never reported. These included the partial destruction of the Matetsi River bridge two days after I had crossed it on my way north.

A week later on the same road between Bulawayo and Victoria Falls, the terrorists had taken to laying nails on the tarmac to puncture the wheels of passing cars. In one convoy alone four vehicles had to change tires, but because the column was protected by the army, the

insurgents did not attack; their objective, I was told by a reliable source, appears to be the lone, unprotected civilian vehicle.

The war appears to have moved into a more aggressive stage—particularly in areas where ZAPU-Zipra forces are active.

Farms continue to be hit and lone vehicles ambushed. One result is that more civilian lives have been lost in Rhodesia in the past four months than in any other comparable period in the country's history. Observers have noted that the average Zipra terrorist is a much better motivated individual than his Zanla-ZANU counterpart.

But terrorists are also making some bad mistakes from time to time.

Audrey Chatham who farms in the Lupani area came out of his shower naked except for the FN rifle he was carrying one hot February afternoon to find himself accosted by two armed insurgents in his living room. Both men were shot dead.

At about the same time, another farmer in the West Nicholson area was plagued by a gang of terrorists who had been intimidating his labor. Acting on a tip-off early one Sunday morning he went down to the local compound to find nine terrorists dead drunk in the middle of a terrified crowd of locals waving their guns about. He shot all nine.

There is little doubt that the black civilian population live in constant fear and awe of the men with guns who come across the border to terrorize them.

One group of eight terrorists managed to keep an entire labor force of a farm in the Matetsi area within their control for three weeks. The ploy they used was simple and bordered on the ridiculous.

The insurgent leader showed the tribespeople a microphone. This device, he said; would tell him if any of his hostages had informed on his presence. Then he would kill the man who had talked. The gang was discovered by accident and ruse checked.

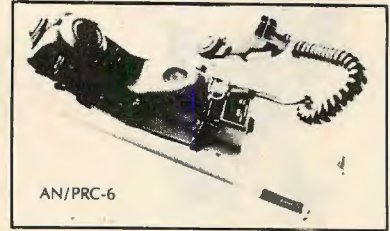
In spite of considerable military activity, the terrorist accent is still on soft targets.

In the Lupani area there were originally 22 cattle dips regularly in use. All but three have now been put out of commission. Virtually all regions where the terrorists are active have the same story to tell.

Another recent communique has stated that over 100 clinics in Tribal Trust Lands have been attacked; of these 71 were closed and five razed. The same report spoke about three ambulances having been fired on and one stolen. There have also been 14 hospitals closed and 17 are now operating at reduced strength.

Labor remains a prime target for any insurgent gang, particularly for Nkomo's Zipra terrorists who are pushing many men of all ages across the borders of Zambia and Botswana in a desperate bid to stiffen their numbers in preparation for

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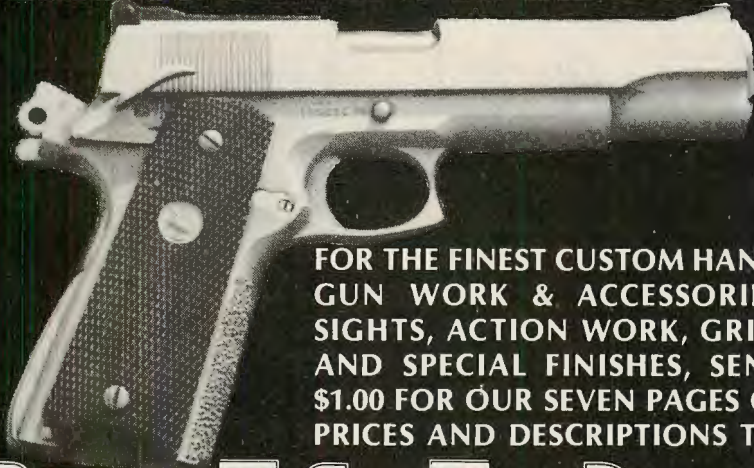
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a confrontation with Robert Mugabe's might, which must come in the not too distant future.

Everywhere one goes in Matabeleland it's the same; young men, schoolboys and older laborers abducted by squads of insurgents. Particularly hard hit have been the safari companies who remain in business catering to overseas clientele in spite of the war.

Rosslyn Safaris, for example, lost all its labor in a single raid in February. Diamond T Safaris, also of the Victoria Falls area, lost 20 laborers in a night raid; like the others, all were abducted to Botswana.

Recent reports said that a prime target during the present period is Tjolutjo, where Nkomo intends to send in 1,000 of his best warriors to subvert authority.

One of the most serious side effects of the continuing war in Rhodesia is that various health measures which were implemented before by the Smith Government are now also being subverted.

Apart from the threat of cattle disease because of the lack of dipping facilities, Tsetse Fly is now also become endemic in a region adjoining Mozambique and Zambia as large as Oregon. In some areas the Tsetse onslaught is so bad that even the insurgents refuse to move about by day, preferring to infiltrate regions of their choice during the dark hours. Anything moving on the roads attracts swarms of the insects often 10 to 15 meters deep.

Botswana is also feeling the effects of continued hostilities.

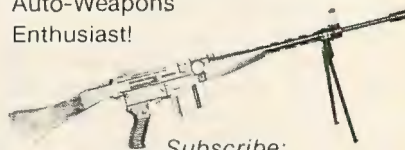
Apart from an increase in the size of the Tsetse belt, the Malarial belt is now moving southwards at a rate of about 100 kilometers a year.

As a consequence, it will take less than a decade for many parts of Southern Africa that were formerly free of malaria to feel the effects of this deterioration of control. The worst affected areas are likely to be parts of the Transvaal and the Northern Cape.



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## RAPIDFIRE

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(continued from page 59)

**SOF:** What type of book is it?

**MOORE:** It's not a novel, that will be the next one. This one is a factual account of Rhodesia as I see it, based on the last 14 months of my studies there. I've had a fulltime operation and office staff in Rhodesia since August 1976. This is very much a book the pro-Marxist liberals will attack, hate, despise, but it's the truth.

**SOF:** We noted also that you had put out a number of releases that were syndicated by the *New York Times*.

**MOORE:** I did write a series for the *New York Times* Syndicate, called "The Crippled Eagles," and that's the title of my novel about the Americans fighting in Rhodesia. It'll be a Green Berets of Rhodesia. I'm following the same format I used in *The Green Berets*, which is successful and gives me the latitude that I need in Rhodesia as I needed in the Vietnam war at that particular time.

**SOF:** When the *New York Times* syndicated your Crippled Eagles series, how widely was it carried?

**MOORE:** It was carried in newspapers coast to coast. I think the actual number of newspapers might be 30 that actually carried it.

**SOF:** Did the *New York Times* carry it?

**MOORE:** No. The Syndicate made good money on it. The Syndicate is separate from the *Times*. The *New York Times* Syndicate syndicates a great deal of material that is never published in the *New York Times*.

**SOF:** Why did you choose the name Crippled Eagles?

**MOORE:** It seemed to me that typified what Americans are. They're eagles—like Eagle Squadron, Lafayette Esquadron; eagle has always been a sort of a term to mean Americans. The Americans fighting in Rhodesia are crippled by their own government. They're threatened with loss of their rights as citizens and generally harassed. That's why crippled eagles seems to fit the bill, and they love it. It gives them an identity.

**SOF:** Who are some of the black African leaders that you have met?

**MOORE:** Sithole and Chief Chirau. Senator Chief Chirau is elected by his fellow chiefs of Rhodesia in the African tradition. All of the chiefs elect him as their chief of chiefs. He is moderate, against violence and terror. In my opinion, one of the finest statesmen I've ever met.

**SOF:** What does he think, Robin, of the Anglo-American initiative, their efforts to replace Rhodesian Security Forces with the terrorists?

**MOORE:** Dead set against that. He said the only thing that can save Rhodesia is to have black majority rule as soon as possible *but* to keep the present security forces operation.

**SOF:** What does he feel will happen if in fact the terrorists do replace the present Rhodesian Security Forces?



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**MOORE:** He feels that there will be a wholesale massacre, civil war, with all the moderates like himself wiped out. He doesn't have an army; he's a chief. He is not part of the government of Ian Smith, although that was the excuse used by Andrew Young to prevent him from visiting the United States, because he was a senator. That is like saying that George McGovern was part of the Administration of Richard Nixon. But Young is very much concerned about having moderate blacks like Chirau or even Sithole coming to this country and making Americans understand that what he—Young—is backing is in effect communist aggression and terrorism.

**SOF:** How many—roughly—how many Americans are there serving in Rhodesia?

**MOORE:** It is my opinion that there are roughly 300 or so Americans in one way or another involved in the war effort there. Not all of them in uniform.

**SOF:** We have been in touch with a number of people over there and we've noted in many cases a lot of frustration, a lot of problems with adjustment for the Americans going over. Do you have any comments on this?

**MOORE:** Well, I've seen a great deal of that and one of the things I've tried to do at the Embassy is to counsel these men.

**SOF:** What is the attitude of Rhodesians to foreigners serving in the armed forces?

**MOORE:** There is a certain amount of hostility. They say we don't need you.

**SOF:** Why do you feel that's the case?

**MOORE:** The Rhodesians are very insulated people. They have been unable to travel for 12 years because of sanctions. They don't dislike foreigners but at the same time they don't like foreigners, and a lot of Americans—not just Americans but others as well—tend to come in and start bragging about their experiences around the world and the Rhodesians don't want to hear this.

**SOF:** Have you had any indication that mail either going to or coming from Rhodesia has been interfered with?

**MOORE:** I've heard that. From personal experience I cannot confirm that because to the best of my knowledge I've never failed to get a letter nor have a letter that I've mailed reach its destination.

**SOF:** Who runs the embassy when you're gone?

**MOORE:** Col. Vernon Gillespie.

**SOF:** Robin, if any of our readers wish to contribute money to help with your efforts to get the truth about Rhodesia out to the American public to whom should such contributions be sent?

**MOORE:** Just send it to: The American Embassy of Goodwill, 2 Ross, Salisbury, Rhodesia.

**SOF:** Thank you and good luck with your operation.



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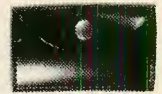


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(continued from page 57)

I removed the fiber glass handguard material from the bottom and rear edges of the upper handguard with a file to achieve proper stock and receiver clearances from the handguard. I then glued a piece of foam rubber in the rearward portion of the handguard at the topmost position. This 1/2-inch square by 3/16-inch thick rubber will keep the handguard in a high location away from the stock. The handguard is then moved as far forward on the barrel as possible; once this is accomplished, using a punch, ding the track on the barrel where the handguard metal fittings go in the groove. Put the dings just behind the metal fittings—this prevents rear movement of the handguard. I did a clean-up polishing of the gas piston and cylinder, using 600 grit paper—lightly.

New come the real pains-in-the-stock. I received the rifle with a cracked stock in the reamer area—and sent it back to Springfield, receiving the replacement stock a few days later—a surplus G.I. stock, heavy with linseed oil. Springfield had sanded the outside and it was fairly free of oil in this area—but not in any other areas. The oil had penetrated to a depth of 1/32- to 1/16-inch, especially on the end grain. Because this oil softens the wood, it weakens the stock—no good for a combat rifle.

I removed the metal stock liner and set about removing some wood against

which the liner fits. I replaced this wood with bedding compound, which adds great strength to the stock and prevents wood compression during recoil. The portion of the stock liner frame which acts as an enclosure for magazines was beveled to allow for more rapid reloading.

Using a 1/8-inch drill bit, I drilled a series of holes approximately 1/4-inch deep on the upper surfaces of the stock and also on the flat surfaces inside the receiver area. I then drilled the same sized holes in the trigger area. Using a small wood chisel, I joined the holes to provide a series of grooves in which the bedding compound would be poured later. I then removed wood in the barrel channel to a depth of 3/16 inch to 1/4 inch, to get rid of oil-soaked wood. I replaced this wood with fiber glass cloth (three layers), using a glass epoxy liquid to fill up the cloth. This modification adds tremendous strength to the stock. I would recommend this to the owner of any M1-A.

I also removed the metal stock ferrule from the front of the stock, grinding it out so that it would not contact the gas system when assembled. I then removed some of the oil-soaked wood around this ferrule, replacing it with glass-bedding compound to add strength to this area. After this had hardened and was totally cured, I began bedding the stock by pouring compound into the grooves I had cut in it, following the bedding manufacturer's instructions on the use of release agent to the letter. I then closed the trigger assembly to within 1/8 inch of the trigger, holding it shut with a steel wire. The glass was allowed to set up for 24 hours. The barrel and action were then removed and cleaned up to be oiled, lubed and reassembled. I did not close the trigger guard all the way so that greater clamping pressure would be provided when it was finally assembled.

I honed all 90 degree corners in the action to remove burrs and polished the spring guide to prevent binding. The trigger has a 4 1/2-pound pull with no creep and a crisp let off—I requested this when I ordered the rifle and the factory gladly obliged me.

I glass-sealed all possible areas where dust can creep in—especially the original location of the selector switch. I polished the lengths of all four upper corners of the magazines for about 1/2 inch to allow very fast reloading as compared to a "new" parkerized magazine.

I use two slings when I carry the rifle for long distances: A nylon sling and a leather one. The nylon sling helps me "pack" the rifle on my back in the fashion of Olympic biathlon match shooters. The leather sling goes over my right shoulder and the nylon over my left so that the rifle is centered on my back, leaving my hands absolutely free. The single leather sling is available for quick use. I don't notice the nylon sling's loose

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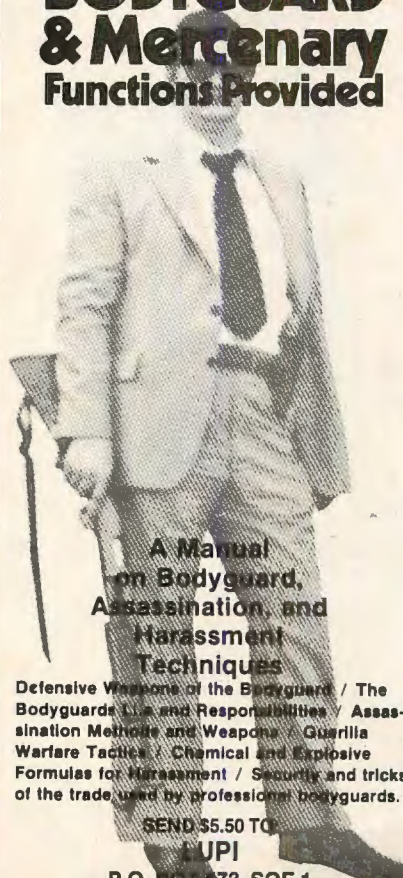
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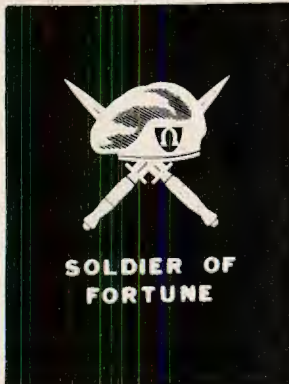
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swing weight when I'm packing or shooting. I have marked the proper settings for whatever positions I might shoot from on the holes on the leather sling, since the sling adjustments vary from sitting to prone, etc.

I have the standard military cleaning kit, oil, grease, patches, etc. in the stock. I carry a long pin to clean the gas-passage hole in the barrel by access through the gas porthole

I was recently approached by a member of the SOF staff to revamp a standard grade M1-A for possible combat use, without the specialized equipment necessary for regulation modifications used by the U.S. Army marksmanship unit at Ft. Benning, Georgia. The modifications I have done can be done by anyone in his home with just a pocket knife, small sharpening stone, and an electric drill.

I really couldn't improve on the accuracy unless I have control over the gas system and barrel manufacture. I can and do improve on reliability and consistency of a M1-A rifle with these modifications.

I ordered the combat rifle with an extra trigger assembly, spring housing, extractor, gas piston, and two firing pins. Since this weapon is to be used in a foreign country where replacement parts are not available, I felt these extras might prevent supply problems.

I reworked the trigger for a crisp let-off by stoning the surfaces. I did not adjust trigger pull weight. All of the new rifles I have ever received from Springfield have burrs in the flash suppressor—I removed these with a file. I stoned the 90 degree corners in the action slightly to polish them up and to remove burrs. I also stoned the action to allow for more free play. I polished the standard spring guide on all four corners to prevent spring bind.

I removed the butt plate and sprayed epoxy paint on the exposed end grain and holes, to prevent moisture from entering the stock. Then I reassembled the butt plate.

I then tightened up the sights and indexed them for proper adjustment (marked them with paint every five clicks).

Using sand paper and trichlorethylene, I cleaned more oil from the outside of the stock. Three coats of clear epoxy paint were applied as a base to the stock. I then painted a "universal" camo job on the stock, using four shades of green, white, and black. After this dried, I sprayed a couple more coats of clear epoxy paint, followed by several coats of flat clear paint to cut glare and reflection. The upper handguard was painted flat black and then sprayed with flat clear paint to cut reflection.

During these operations I kept all metal portions of this rifle spotlessly clean by washing in hot water or solvent, a habit I picked up when building racing engines for my hotrods.

My modifications on this standard rifle cost \$10.50 in paint, solvent, glass cloth, epoxy, bedding compound, and sandpaper. Needless to say, there is a lot of satisfaction in piddling-around with this rifle. My one hope is that a few commie bastards fall prey to it when it is topped off with its ART scope.

Enough of my tricks. Now, let's discuss the genuine N.M. M-14 or M1-A. All the modifications from here on are recommended by the U.S. Army marksmanship unit at Ft. Benning, Georgia for the military. Before any manufactured rifle is used by their unit at Ft. Benning, it goes through these 11 additional checks and modifications. These same modifications are performed on the national match rifles Springfield builds, with the possible exception of barrel construction.

1. BARREL: inside diameter is  $0.3004 \pm 0.0002$  with no variation over 0.0001 in any one specific barrel. The barrel is rejected if it is any larger at the muzzle end than the breech. Groove diameter is  $0.3083 + 0.0002$ —again no variation in the specific barrel of more than 0.0001.

The exterior area of the barrel where the operating rod guide is positioned is knurled to increase the diameter to  $0.808 + 0.0002$  in order to provide a tight non-slip for the operating rod guide. Care must be taken so that the interior of the barrel is not constricted by the knurling.

Barrels are also air gauged and checked for straightness by a light beam on a reflective self-centering rod. If the barrel is out of kilter, it will deflect light reflected towards the source, resulting in rejection of the rifle.

2. HEADSPACE GO = 1.631 inches  
NO GO = 1.635 inches

3. GAS CYLINDER: the gas cylinder and lower barrel band are permanently assembled to each other by means of special screws and epoxy which requires annealing of the spindle valve prior to drilling. This results in zero movement in this assembly and contributes significantly to accuracy.

In order to cut down movement, the barrel band is reamed .020 over size as is the sleeve which fits over the barrel upon assembly. (Don't try this extremely complicated procedure and technique unless you have full plans, tools, and are damn handy.)

4. GAS PISTON STEM DIAMETER is .397 and the piston diameter .496, while the standard piston stem diameter is .399 and the piston diameter .497. The gas cylinder is polished with 320 and 400 grit paper to prevent carbon buildup.

5. FLASH SUPPRESSOR is .406 inside diameter at the muzzle and .375 where the flutes start. This taper is accom-

(continued on page 84)

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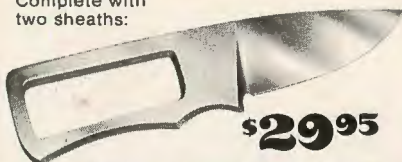


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DEALER INQUIRIES INVITED

(continued from page 14)

## SOUTH AFRICAN NEWS . . .

As we go to press, a new monthly newsletter, *South African Report & Comments (SARC)*, states that 5000 Cuban troops, 1000 SWAPO troops, and an unknown number of MPLA units have been systematically destroying small tribal communities in Cueene Province in order to eliminate supplies of food and manpower for the UNITA forces. The same publication claims that \$18,000,000 has been raised by Iranian, French and Arab investors to destabilize the Marxist MPLA government. SARC can be obtained from Box 34-1728, Coral Gables, FL 33134. (\$12 per year.)

## VIET VET BELL VS. LIBERAL CASE . . .

An interesting contest is developing in the New Jersey Republican primary race for the U.S. Senate seat. Ultra-liberal incumbent Clifford Case, who has consistently voted against new weapons systems and who supported Andrew Young to be U.N. ambassador, is being opposed by a conservative Viet Vet, Jeff Bell. Jeff Bell served with the SVN Ninth Infantry Division in the Mekong Delta.

## DOGS OF WAR . . .

The London Times recently reported that Frederick Forsythe's book, *The Dogs of War* was based on an actual attempt by fourteen mercs to overthrow President Francisco Macias Nguema of Equatorial Guinea, reputed to rule in a style similar to Idi Amin's in Uganda. The plot miscarried when Spanish authorities became suspicious and refused to allow the necessary munitions to be delivered to the plotters' yacht, anchored in Spain. The facts came to light when Alan Murphy, one of the mercs involved, was killed in a gun battle with British police. His diary was found, implicating Forsythe as the chief organizer and financier, with Scotsman Alexander Ramsay Gay identified as the leader of the merc group. The operation allegedly cost Forsythe \$500,000, which was recouped in sales of the book.

## THE LEGION IN CHAD . . .

A French Foreign Legion Force of 200 men was rushed into Chad in April after two French military advisors and three French mercenaries employed by the Chad government were killed by rebels. The two advisors were killed in an attack on a Government base at Sallal in central Chad, while the mercenaries—one a pilot and the others soldiers—were killed 280 miles north of the capitol. The legionnaires were requested by the government of Chad to strengthen its forces in anticipation of an offensive by the Chad National Liberation Front.

## BOEING 707 PERSONNEL . . .

Air Niugini, which operates out of New Guinea to Australia, Hong Kong, and Manila, is searching for Boeing 707 qualified personnel—salaries range from \$40,000 for pilots to \$22,000 for flight engineers, with additional financial benefits. Write: Flight Operations Manager, Air Niugini, P.O. Box 7186, Boroko, Papua, New Guinea.

## CAMBODIAN NEWS . . .

For news of Cambodia and refugees in Thailand, send for the monthly newsletter of the Cambodian Appeal, P.O. Box 2453, Hyattsville, MD 20784. Donations are also welcome.

## VIETNAM POW-MIA's . . .

SOF was recently contacted by the National Human Rights Committee for POW-MIA's. The Committee is seeking additional information on POW-MIA's and is pressuring the administration to demand an accounting of all POW-MIA's from the Hanoi government. Write: 86 Hill Street, Walden, NY 12586.

## BANGKOK WATERING HOLES . . .

When in Bangkok be sure to stop in at "The Barrel," 68 Patpong Road. Ask the owner, Blaise McCormack, what's happening . . . Another American watering hole in Thailand is "Lucy's Tiger Den," 285/11 Silom Road, run by "Tiger" Ryberg. Both places have good service and conversation.



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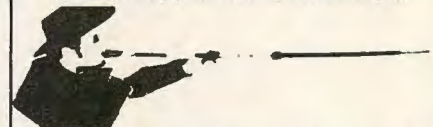
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**"CONTACT!": A Tribute to those who serve Rhodesia. By John Lovett. 240 pp. Hardback. Published by Galaxie Press, 15 Douglas Rd., Salisbury, Rhodesia. Review by Dennis Martin.**

The first printing of "Contact!" sold out within days of publication, as the Rhodesian people proudly and eagerly sought a record of their lone fight against Communism. In this reviewer's opinion "Contact!" will prove equally popular with those throughout the Free World sympathetic with the Rhodesian cause, as well as those whose interests lie in the general field of matters military.

The book covers the historical background of the Rhodesian Security Forces: from the early glories of the British South Africa Police at Shangani and Mazoe; the blooding of the Rhodesia Regiment at Mafeking, and the significant contributions to victory in two World Wars. Mention is made of the seldom-stated fact that Rhodesia supplied more troops per head of population to the allied war effort (in W.W.2) than any other country in the Empire. In Malaya too, the Rhodesians saw action by sending a detachment for the Malayan Scouts. Upon their return this detachment became the nucleus of C Squadron, Rhodesian Special Air Service Rgt.

In a chapter headed "The Terror War," the author outlines the origins, motives, aims and methods of the various terrorist factions. Rooted in the inherently unstable Central African Federation a movement grew out of originally nationalistic and anti-colonial parties, fueled by Marxist doctrines to become an entire alphabet of terror—ZANU, ZAPU, ZANLA, SAANC, PCC, etc. Following UDI in November 1965, sporadic attacks of farms increased to the point of a definite terror campaign. The Security Forces responded energetically to the escalating insurgency. In particular large incursions were mopped up near Sinoia in '66 and on the Zambian border in '68. These early successes were, however, merely the initial skirmishes in what was to become a full-scale terror war. In 1972 the Security Forces countered by launching "Operation Hurricane," the first in a series of continuing operations designed to crush the terrorist presence. At present there are four main operation areas: "Hurricane," which started at Centenary, covers the NE segment; "Thrasher," covering the Eastern Highlands; "Repulse," protecting the SE (including the strategic Beitbridge); and the latest, "Tangent," guarding the Wankie, Victoria Falls and Botswana-border areas.

Engaged in these operations are some of the finest troops in the world. With hundreds of photographs to illustrate his words, Mr. Lovett describes every unit in every arm of service: Police,

Army, Air Force and Internal Affairs. Some units have become well known for their high level of ability and are now elite formations. The Rhodesian Light Infantry—RLI—nicknamed the "Incredibles" by Prime Minister Ian Smith, is such a unit. Organized along Commando lines, the RLI is the backbone of the "Fire Force," the standard Rhodesian fast-response system for exploiting and following up a contact. The Special Air Service (S.A.S.) is also described, but owing to the clandestine nature of much of their work, little detail can be given. Operating on land, sea, and air the S.A.S. make a valuable contribution, both internally and externally.

The Selous Scouts have received a measure of negative publicity, most of it speculative and from people whose motives are doubtful. As another primarily clandestine unit, with the tasks of tracking, sniping and recon, it was difficult to present the true picture. Recently the unit's CO, Major (now Lt. Col.) Ron Reid-Daly, decided to show some aspects of the training and selection courses to the world's press, and to clear up some of the questions. What emerged from this, as presented in "Contact!", is a picture of a competent, motivated and highly professional unit trained to endure hardships of many sorts in order to get the job done. The Scouts' selection course is arguably the toughest anywhere, and although the author does not state this, like the S.A.S. they specialize in "external ops" beyond Rhodesia's borders . . . enough said.

The men of these elite units, RLI, S.A.S., Selous Scouts and the mounted Grey's Scouts, have certainly caught the popular imagination, as clad in shorts, "takkies" (running shoes), and cammo T-shirts they are in constant deployment at the "sharp end." But there are many others making a vital contribution, and I feel one of the main qualities of "Contact!" is the picture of total commitment it portrays of the Rhodesian people, black, white, young, old, male, and female, to the winning of this war against an enemy who uses terror itself as a weapon.

I found it a pity that no mention was made of the numbers of foreigners at present fighting in the Rhodesian Regular and Reserve forces. The numbers are growing and many have previous service with first-class units. They provide a valuable infusion of experience which, when adapted to the peculiarities of the Rhodesian situation, can only be a positive factor.

One of the most interesting sections of the book, for me, was the citations for various awards and decorations. These provide a glimpse of how the fighting is being done and the war won.



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(continued from page 80)

contact with the suppressor when it is crooked. In addition, it increases accuracy with M-118 N.M. ammo. The distance between the .406 and .375 diameters is 2.600.

6. **HAND GUARD** is no closer than 1/16 inch between the top edge of the stock and bottom edge of the handguard in a fully forward position in order to provide space between the rear edge of the handguard and the receiver.

7. **TRIGGER**. Lots of changes—we'll keep it brief. Working surfaces are cleared of metal oxide coating. All pins should be round, and the hammer spring housing polished. The whole assembly at contact points is lubricated with Lubri-Plate®. The pull must be 4½ to 4¾ pounds with no creep and a crisp let off.

8. **STOCK**: High grade walnut—straight grained with no sap wood. After the manufacturer has epoxy-impregnated it, the stock is routed to allow room for new glass bedding.

The steel liner is modified by careful cutting to allow better adhesion when the whole assembly is glass bedded. It is then epoxy-bonded to the stock during final glass bedding.

The metal stock ferrule (metal area under the gas cylinder on the front of the stock) is ground out so that it will not contact the barrel during operation.

The Army marksmanship unit then installs the barrel and receiver group, using a special steel, aluminum or brass fixture to keep the barrel a specified distance from the stock when the assembly is clamped in to allow the glass bedding to cure. The trigger guard is closed to within ¼ inch from the trigger and held there with a steel link. Once the glass bedding has cured, the barrel fixture is removed. The gas system is installed, and the suppressor is put on. The trigger guard is closed the rest of the way so that a very strong upward force is exerted by the barrel. All these modifications help keep the rifle very tight in the stock, resulting in consistent accuracy.

9. **OPERATING SPRING ROD** is modified by removing the flat front part and discarding it. The U.S. AMTU armorers weld the lug that the pin fits through to a 5.75-inch .344-inch diameter steel rod to prevent spring bind and give consistent spring action. (Do not attempt this without a drawing, since a tapered point is necessary for this rod.)

10. **SIGHTS**: The factory supplies a N.M. front-sight blade with corners sharp to .003 inch. The rear sight is adjustable in ½ MOA increments. MOA means minute of angle; this is the ability to sight and/or shoot a round and change the strike of the bullet one inch at 100 yards, two inches at 200 yards, etc. The rear sight has full MOA adjustments for elevation with a shrouded ½ MOA hood for fine adjustment. The windage adjustment is all ½ MOA.

The sights can be further fine tuned by aligning the front and rear sights on a level plate to assure positive linear relationship during adjustment.

11. **SELECTOR SWITCH**: The hole for the switch mechanism is silver soldered shut on all N.M. rifles.

Well, as you can see, there is one whale of a lot of work in making these rifles dial in on those one-shot 900 meter kills you have heard of. Springfield Armory at Geneseo has a heavy barrel model (heavy only in the barrel channel of the stock) which should outshoot the modified light BBL. USAMTU rifle, which definitely outshoots the standard N.M. rifle which outshoots the standard M-14 rifle which—ah, to hell with it!

(One final note: Besides all of the above hardware info, you can handload for these rifles (see SOF, Issue #7, September 1977, Vol. 2, No. 3) and really pick up accuracy. I really think that if you like the looks of a military rifle, etc., and use it for practical shooting and hunting, you should check out the M1-A.)

*Editor's note: Since this article was written, the author has sent his standard home-modified (non-combat M1-A) back to Springfield for National Match modifications and the heavy barrel. He reports better than M.O.A. accuracy and claims if you can see your target in the sights and it's within range—you'll hit it!*



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**SOCIETY OF VIETNAMESE RANGERS** wants to contact all members who served with the Biet Dong Quan. Especially interested in contacting personnel who served with the 11st Ranger Bn, 1965-67, the Laotian and Cambodian Invasion, Ben Het, Dai Sieng, An Loc and Loc Ninh. Contact: Don Valentine, P.O. Box 29965, Atlanta, GA 39329.

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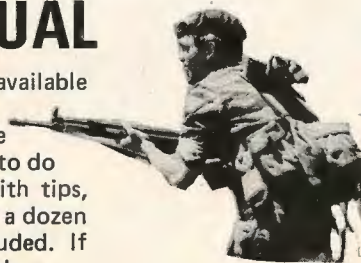
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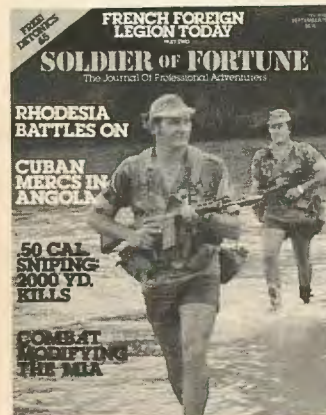
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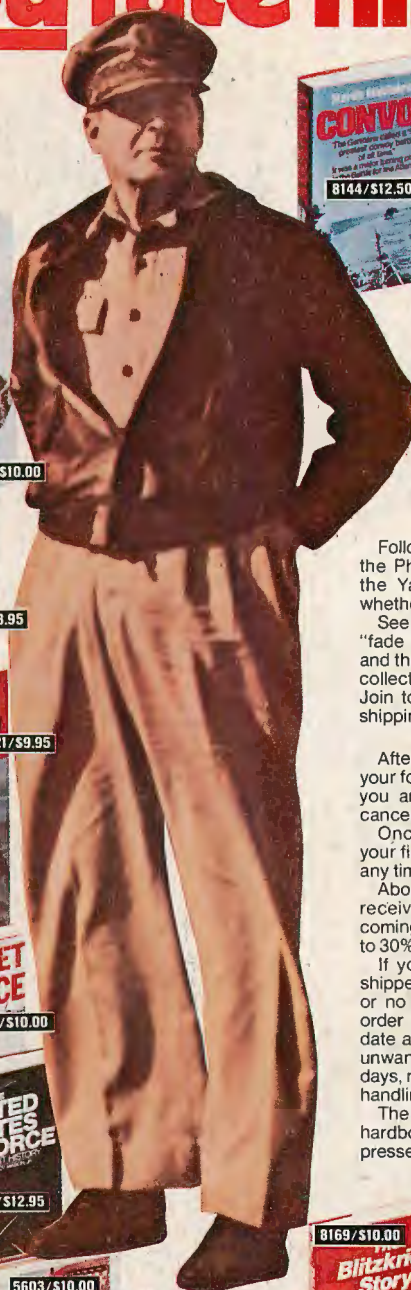
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