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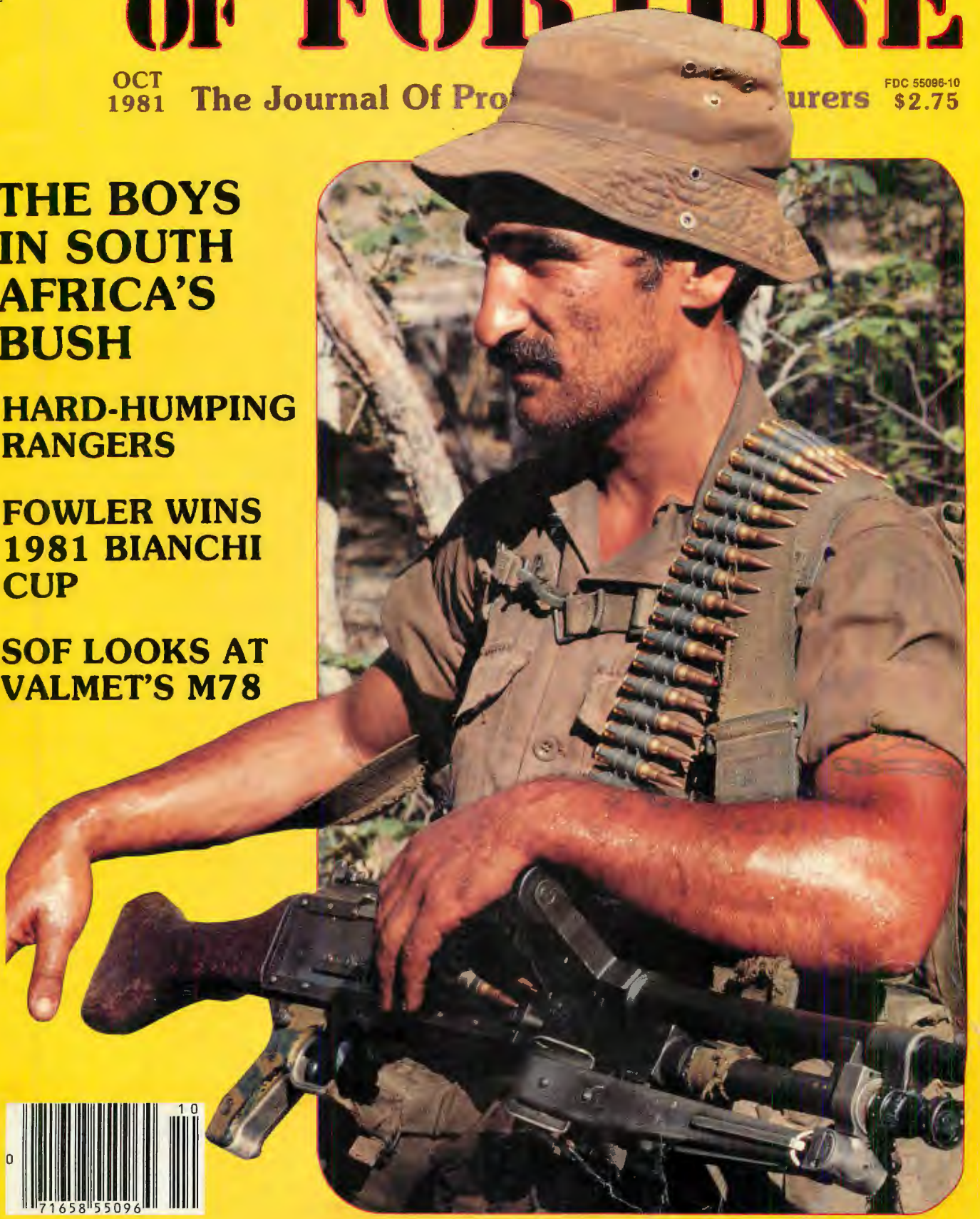

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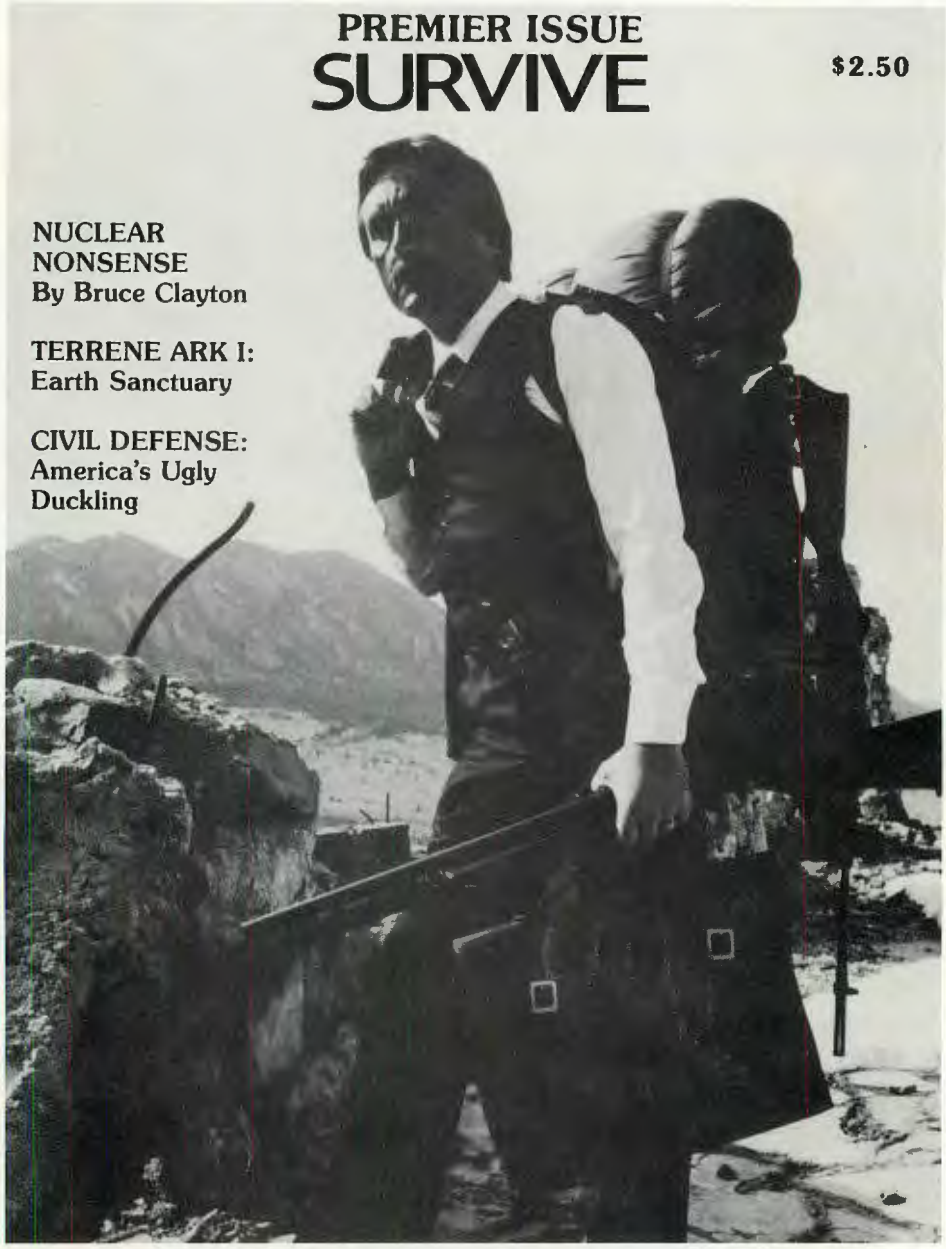

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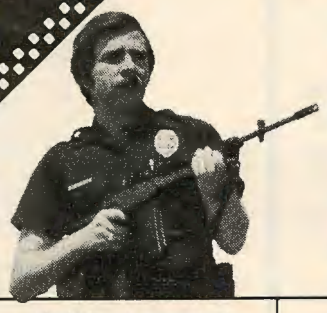
by Capt. Timothy John Mullin



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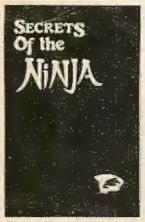

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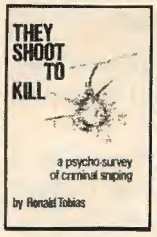

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EDITOR'S NOTES

NO, *Soldier of Fortune* magazine is not going to become a movie mag.

As you are aware, SOF's last three cover shots were taken from movies or TV specials. SOF goes for the most dramatic covers possible, and for three straight months the best shots we had were from "Hollywood." Two were for Marv Wolf's "Making War Movies" series and one illustrated the test and evaluation of the Uzi by SOF Military Small Arms Editor, Peter Kokalis.

This month you can see we've returned to real people in real action with Al Venter's shot of a South African troopie on patrol in Ovamboland.

THE BEST INDIG

A difference of opinion has developed between two *Soldier of Fortune* writers as to which one was assigned to the "best indig" army around last month.

Jim Morris, back from Lebanon, insists the free-wheeling volunteer Christian forces in East Beirut are the best, while Bob Poos, who returned from El Salvador in July, casts his vote for the El Salvadoran army.

Morris says the highly motivated volunteers of East Beirut are rewriting the book on urban warfare and have developed some new firing techniques which are eye-openers.

Poos, after talks with El Salvador's minister of defense, boarded a "chopper" for a ride into San Vicente province in central El Salvador where he joined with Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Brigade, for an attack on a long-held guerrilla stronghold.

After watching Alpha Company attack and take the village and then hold off a night counter-attack by the communist guerrillas, Poos was impressed with its aggressiveness and fire discipline. "The captain in command didn't rattle under fire," said Poos. "But the key to driving off the guerrillas was the unordered squad-size assault led by a sergeant at a critical point in the battle.

"They [the soldiers] are aggressive and highly motivated."

Alpha Company, which had never seen an American journalist in the field before, was so impressed it presented Poos with the *Fronte Martino* Liberation Front flag captured in the village, as well as the orders of the day ripped from a wall in the guerrillas' headquarters.

Morris and Poos are both bent over their typewriters at this time, since their stories are scheduled for SOF's November issue.

WE REGRET

SOF wishes to advise its readers to stop calling Ms. Anna de Leon, Director, Board of Education, Berkeley, Calif.

Regular SOF readers will remember that in our August Bulletin Board we brought attention to a course on the draft being taught in the Berkeley schools.

Ms. de Leon received a number of calls and letters from SOF readers as a result of the item we published. Some of the calls were from reasonable people who wanted to express their opinions in a reasonable manner, but others were of either an obscene or threatening nature. SOF cannot condone the latter type of activity.

While we believe in the right to express opinions and the accountability of public officials for their actions, we don't believe in threatening voices in the night. Standing up and speaking out openly is one thing; accusations blanketed in anonymity are another.

For any inconvenience to Ms. de Leon we apologize.

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SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

OCTOBER/1981
VOL. 6, NO. 10

Page 34

COVER: On South African bush patrols, section machine-gunner carries the most weight (over 110 lbs.). Weapon is GPMG (MAG) in 7.62 NATO. Story begins on p. 46. Photo: Al J. Venter.

Page 42

Page 26

BULLETIN BOARD

by Fred Reed

RUSSIAN MINE POSTER . . .

SOF now has a poster available on the new Russian anti-personnel mine being scattered via helicopter and aircraft in Afghanistan (see SOF, April '81, p. 24). In color, it shows the mine in exact size and with detailed description. The poster is free to all who order on military letterhead. Copies to others interested are available for 50 cents for the first and 25 cents each additional.

Also available are lab reports on the mine and its explosive. The new Russian mine contains a very fast explosive with a detonation rate of 24,000-26,000 fps, about the same as detonating cord or C4.

SOF Publisher Bob Brown (center), Reg Houlihan and Alan Brown (right) examine boots and fatigues contributed by readers to the Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters' Relief.

HELP STILL NEEDED . . .

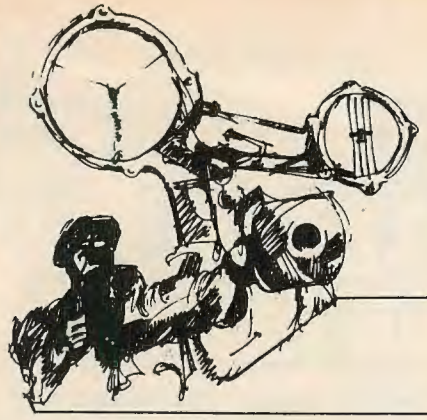
Nicaraguan exiles based in Honduras and fighting the communist Sandinistas in Nicaragua still need serviceable boots and fatigues. If you have old ones and don't think you'll be using them, send them to: SOF, Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters' Relief, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. We'll pass them on . . . The Afghan Freedom Fighters' Fund can still use contributions. The Afghan resistance is somewhat better-armed now than it was last year, but needs anything it can get. Send contributions to Afghan Freedom Fighters' Fund, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. Not tax-deductible. Funds will be donated to pro-Western resistance groups of SOF's choice. Every cent goes to purchase of arms and medicine; none goes for administration, paperwork and so on.

IVAN GETS BURNED . . .

The Afghan resistance fighters are giving the Soviets fits, if an AP report is correct. It seems the Afghans poured large quantities of gasoline into a drainage ditch leading into the Russian base at Bagram, about 35 miles north of Kabul. The attack must have made life interesting for the Ivans: Flames spread across the base and engulfed large dumps of ammunition and fuel. The fires burned for more than 24 hours and shrapnel fell for miles around. The Russkys dee-deed in a hurry with their MiGs and helos to keep them from blowing up.

The occasion of the attack was the anniversary of the death of Abdul Nijib Kalakani, a resistance leader

Continued on page 84



FLAK

MEMORIAL THANKS ...

Sirs:

On behalf of our national sponsoring committee, boards of directors and advisers, I wish to thank you for the generous gift of $1,000 from *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine. As a veteran of the Vietnam War who witnessed the death of many fellow soldiers, I am deeply touched by your support.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial will be a significant acknowledgement by our nation of the patriotic service rendered by those Americans who served in Vietnam. It will have special meaning, too, to the families and friends of the 57,692 servicemen who gave their lives there. Upon this memorial will be inscribed the name of each American who made the supreme sacrifice for his country during that war.

We now have a design for the memorial. It is magnificent — serene and dignified — it will do much to pay lasting tribute to the Americans who lost their lives while in service to their country in Vietnam.

We deeply appreciate *Soldier of Fortune's* support of our important work. You can be proud of the part you have played in building the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Sincerely yours,
Jan C. Scruggs, President
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc.
1110 Vermont Ave., NW, Ste. 308
Washington, DC 20005

LOOKING FOR RUSTY ...

Sirs:

I would appreciate help in locating a couple of friends I worked with outside Rusape, Rhodesia, in early 1979. They are Richard and Rusty Moore. When I last saw Rusty, he was starting to fly choppers for the Rhodesian air force. His brother was headed up Kariba way looking for more farm-security work. If anyone has any info, I would like to hear from them.

Thanks
David Crawley
909 7 Ave. SW
Rochester, MN 55901

NCO'S BEST FRIEND ...

Sirs:

In the past couple of years, I have read SOF off and on. I have always found the feature stories of great interest. You can imagine my surprise, however, when my 1st sergeant stood up in front of formation and asked, "How many people subscribe to SOF?" Later, when I asked him why, top said, "SOF is the best friend an NCO has," the reason being that the All-Volunteer Army has failed miserably. Just about everything the PA puts out is pure bullshit. It tries to BS the soldiers they're getting because most of them are untrainable.

Also, your articles aided my wife and me in deciding who to vote for. Being stationed in Germany makes it a little tough to make an intelligent decision. Keep up the good work. I will be awaiting my next issue of SOF.

Sgt. Louis G. Beck
APO, New York, New York

FRIENDLY FLAK ...

Sirs:

All FLAK, like all bullets, isn't bad — it just depends on who gets hit. Good FLAK: your June '81 issue. I considered it great — *outstanding*! Hope to see more fire power directed in the same areas as SOG and POW/MIA articles. Your direction of attack in setting the responsibilities for the cover-up of the POW/MIA situation is *on target*.

I hope you will continue to target the media (generally speaking) and political leaders who are *unwilling* to go all out for the POW/MIAs. Also, keep after the political individuals who are for the other side. Remember, at times they look just like us but when the bullets fly or it's time to get out of the hole and do one's work — they fail.

This FLAK is coming from friendly forces and in support of your mission. Get some, SOF!

Semper Fi
Terry Charbonneau
Palatine, Illinois

Continued on page 88

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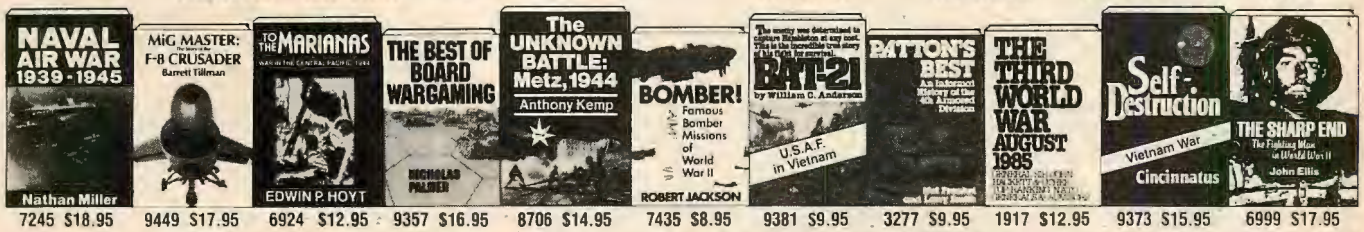

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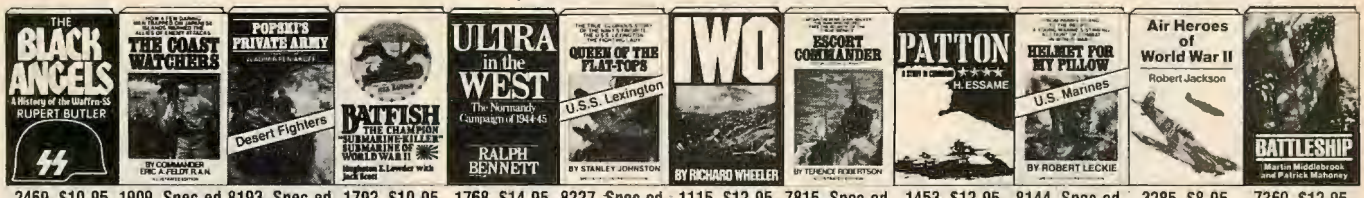

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COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT

Rear Sights, Double Actions And Shooting The M-586

by Ken Hackathorn

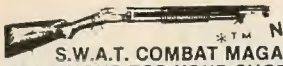
ARMAND Swenson, the grand master of the custom Combat .45, has just come up with an excellent fixed rear sight for the practical shooter. The need for adjustable sights has been exaggerated by the competition shooter: good, high fixed sights are almost always a better choice. Fixed sights are much less susceptible to damage from hard campaigning. Note that most shooters with adjustable sights zero their pistols once and then rarely touch the adjustments. For the man with fixed sights, the chore is only to set the windage by drifting the rear sight, then filing the front sight for proper elevation.

One reason for the popularity of the low-mounted Bomar sights is the excellent sight picture that the Bomar rear-sight blade provides. The new Swenson fixed rear sight gives you the same sight picture as the Bomar, but it is far more rugged and less expensive — selling for $29.50. All that is necessary is to tap out the old rear sight and then drift the new Swenson sight into the dovetail. A higher front sight must, of course, be installed, a job best left to a qualified gunsmith. The Swenson rear sight comes with all sharp corners rounded off and, like all of Swenson's work, is of top quality. I have been using prototype Swenson rear sights for a number of months now and find them to be an excellent choice. They are available from Swenson's .45 Shop, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 606, Fallbrook, CA 92028.

Hackathorn recommends Armand Swenson's new rear sight for the .45 pistol. It installs in existing rear-sight dovetail in minutes. Photo: Ken Hackathorn

COMPETITION shooting led to the improvements in hardware needed to bring firearms to their top potential. The PPC shooting game provides an incentive for many law-enforcement officers to improve their marksmanship. The super-smooth double-action trigger pulls of most PPC guns are a joy. Smoother and lighter double-action triggers on officers' duty revolvers have become the vogue. Consequently, many

Continued on page 20



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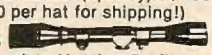

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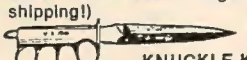

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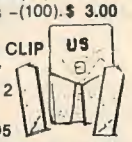

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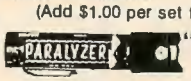

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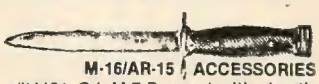

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IN REVIEW

WARRIORS: A Parris Island Photo Journal. By Richard Stack. Paperback. 90 pages of black-and-white photographs with extended captions. Published by Harper and Row, New York. Now available only from Richard Stack, Group-PAM/USA, 244 E. 21st St., New York, NY 10010. $9.95. Money orders/cashiers checks only. Review by Fred Reed.

OCCASIONALLY a genuinely wonderful book appears, a book worth reading over and over. For anyone who has been through Parris Island, **Warriors** is such a book. Richard Stack, a superb photographer and graduate of PI, has captured the misery, absurdity and agony of Parris Island — the bellowing of those broad, mean men in the Smokey the Bear hats, the long grim hours on the grinder under a sun that slowly melts the brains, the incredible invective that can come only from the bowels of a DI: "Boy, I don't like you. You better *move*, you communist motherfucker. I *know* the Kremlin sent you to fuck up my Marine Corps."

The god-awful mud of the island is here, and the misery, which civilians can't imagine, of first issue with that howling cannibal of a DI stalking up and down the long tables full of gear. Every page brings it back: the sinking feeling at oh-dark-thirty when the GI-can lid comes crashing down the barracks and the DI begins roaring and looking for someone to kill; and the despairing thought that comes many times every day, "Shit ... three months... "

The obstacle course is here, the long runs in boots under the Spanish moss, the three DIs ganging up on a scrawny recruit until he bursts into tears. Do you remember standing naked in line at the inoculation center and watching that sadistic HM1 harpooning the man in front of you in the butt ... and stirring the needle around? It's here. Remember holding that M14 on outstretched arms until death seemed infinitely desirable? That's here too. Pugil sticks? Graduation? Bayonet practice? All here.

But mostly there are the DIs: cocky, merciless devils who you *knew* spent their off hours roasting babies on spits, but who managed to make Marines out of the worst recruits they had ever seen — *all* recruits were the worst recruits they had ever seen — and somehow ended up with a private's respect.

According to Stack, the book was printed and ready for distribution in 1971, but Harper and Row, since the war in Vietnam was winding down, didn't want to distribute a book which it thought would incite warmongering. It was a stupid decision, as it is hard to imagine any former Marine not buying a copy. Stack is now selling **Warriors** himself, having bought all 8,200 unsold copies from Harper. At $9.95, which includes postage (money order/cashiers check only), it's cheap.

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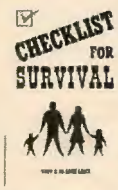

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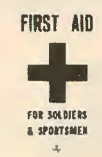

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It Happened To Me

by Walt Darran
as told to M.L. Jones

SOF Contributing Aviation Editor Walt Darran, who flew Navy fighter planes from 1961-67 and piloted Air America and Continental Air Services cargo planes from 1967-69, was present in Laos when (for the only time in aviation history) a helicopter shot down a fixed-wing aircraft — indeed, two of them. The victims were two Polish-built PZL Mielex Antonov AN-2 biplanes, known as Colts, of the North Vietnamese Air Force. The victor was an Air America Huey whose only armament was an AK-47 assault rifle. As Darran tells it:

ON 12 January 1968, an Air America Huey was delivering 105mm ammo from a U.S. TACAN (navigational aids) station perched on a high pinnacle deep in northern Laos to some artillery positions down below.

USAF hauled wreckage of Colt to LS36 for examination after unique air battle. Photo: Ted Moore

I was flying a Continental Air Services Pilatus Porter (a single-engine turboprop transport capable of short landings and takeoffs) making some rice drops in the area at the time. I had just headed back for LS36 (a Royal Laotian Army base) to refuel when the chopper pilot, Ted Moore, screamed over the radio that two Colts were strafing and bombing the artillery positions.

We were the only ones in VHF radio contact with one another at the time and since I was higher, I transmitted the message to CROWN (an orbiting C-130 with powerful radio equipment capable of relaying messages from Laos and Vietnam to U.S. 7th Fleet aircraft carriers) for fighters, all the while pissed as hell that I was almost out of fuel.

I was familiar with the Colt. When I was in the Navy, they'd send us out on "Dawn Patrols," looking for the rascals. They were used for aerial drops to isolated outposts, usually right at dawn in order to avoid visual sightings. To the best of my knowledge, the military never got one.

Nor did they this time, despite the fact that all kinds of fighters were scrambled and sent to the area. By the time they got there, it was all over.

I heard Ted say, "Shit, I'm faster and can outmaneuver them."

So off the Huey went in pursuit. Glen Wood, the flight mechanic, had an AK-47 and shot the bastards down while the Huey made a few passes.

One went down near the scene and the other pancaked into a hill it couldn't outclimb, about 13 miles away.

I had to go to Vientiane the next day, so I missed getting any of the real goodies like Russian pistols, watches and so forth that were distributed when a Chinook brought one of the wrecks into

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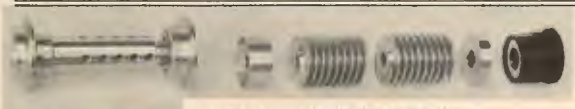

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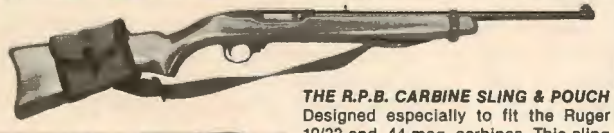

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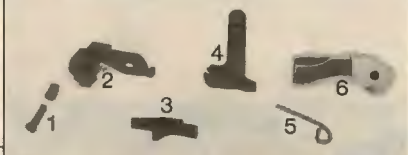

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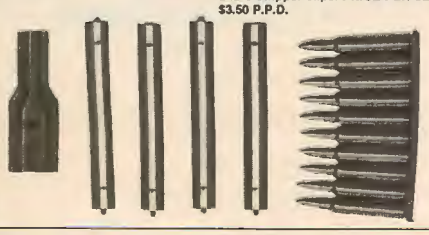

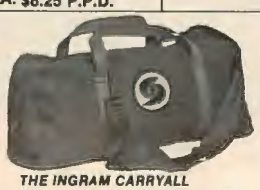

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LS36. One of the guys did manage to save me some of the canvas from the only fixed-wing aircraft ever shot down by a chopper.

I Was There

by Bill Kendrick
as told to M.L. Jones

Bill Kendrick is a patrolman for the Toledo, Ohio, Police Department. On one hot August night in the mid-1970s, he and Bill Burpee, who has been his partner for 16 years, responded to a routine call that erupted into unexpected action. As he tells it:

"UNIT 4, report of a prowler at 239 Elm Street." The dispatcher's voice broke the early morning silence. It was 0445; the bars were long since closed and the drunks were off the roads. We had been headed for the doughnut shop.

"Sounds like some drunk trying to get into the wrong house," Bill said, fighting a yawn.

We were only a few blocks from the call. I turned out my lights as we crossed the main street onto Elm. To further conceal our arrival, I used the emergency brake so the taillights would not come on.

"Very covert," I thought as the brake took hold. The big white Dodge Sport Van creaked and bumped to a stop a few doors down from the complainant's address.

I took the backyard while Bill went to the front. I could hear a dog bark inside the dark house when Bill rapped on the front door. I stuck my flashlight around the back of the house to check the yard out. I saw the usual "boobytraps": low-hanging clotheslines, dog shit laid in a patchwork-quilt pattern and a scattering of other jetsam. Near the garage, a cat was playing with some rats by the garbage cans.

"There's your prowler," I said to myself. Routine. No problem. Just a call that screwed up my coffee break.

I rounded the side of the house as Bill walked in my direction, using his 6-cell, scanning the basement windows. I had the portable radio in my hand. I was about to put us back in service when a blinding flash, followed instantly by what sounded like a 12-gauge report sent me reeling. The radio and my light went flying as I hit the wet grass. There was a second and a third bang as the windows on the side of the house blew out.

I could hear a woman screaming inside. Bill and I rolled up tight against the house's foundation, facing each other. We drew our service revolvers to hold the center window in a crossfire. While Bill held his flashlight on the window, I did a slow back-crawl. Keeping both window and Bill's back in my sight picture, I groped behind me for the radio.

I disregarded radio procedure and yelled, "Shots fired! Unit 4. Send back-up!"

I tucked the radio in my pistol belt and crawled back to my original position. We could still hear people screaming inside and glass breaking. I switched to the two-handed position, trying to keep my hand from shaking. As I tightened my grip, the curtain moved and a face was momentarily visible.

It seemed an eternity before the other units responded. The first officer on the scene sprinted right past Bill and me, lying against the building. (What we lacked in cover, we gained by the

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concealment of darkness.) When we heard the banging on the front door, we knew that enough of the "Marines" had landed for us to take the kneeling position.

The lights came on inside and we stood up, covering the corners on our side of the house. Our command officers were inside, trying to piece the entire scenario together. The elderly residents spoke only broken English, but we rapidly learned what had really happened during those frightful five minutes.

A neo-Nazi band was working this Jewish section of our city and, for a number of weeks, had been threatening the older people in the neighborhood by filling their mailboxes with anti-Semitic literature and making threatening phone calls. The residents had been understandably reluctant to call the police.

Tonight, we deduced, the gang had taped the windows with papers proclaiming "White Power" and "Hitler was right." They had also taped M-60 firecrackers to the windows. We surmised that they had used cigarettes as time-delay fuses. We got the call shortly after the "charges" were set — and walked into the line of fire when the cigarettes burned down to the wicks. As a shock effect, it sure did the job.

When the fireworks started, glass blew into the living room. Since the occupants were upstairs asleep, the only damage was my partner's and my grass-stained knees (and brown-stained shorts).

When the shaking subsided, we held a critique: We had followed prescribed procedures, we had covered each other while taking what little concealment was available, our radio procedure was short and to the point — and most important, we had maintained firearm discipline. Had we opened up at the windows, we could have killed or injured an innocent person.

IF you have a combat or adventure story for "It Happened to Me" or "I Was There," triple-space type it and send it to SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306, Attn: M.L. Jones. All stories should be 500 words or less. Upon publication, SOF will become owner of all publication rights. Submitted articles are subject to editing and revision, although their content and theme will not be changed.

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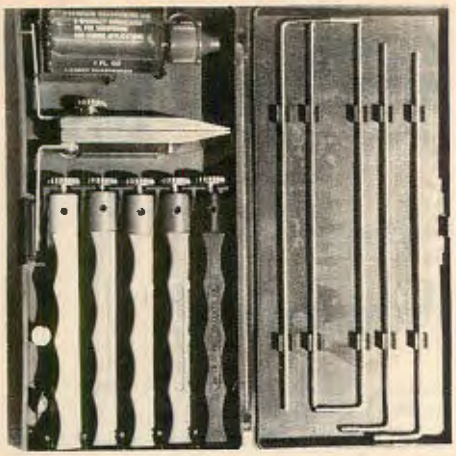
The sale of these laser-aimed firearms is restricted to governmental, military and law-enforcement agencies. They are available from *Laser Products Corporation*, Dept. SOF, 18285 Mt. Baldy Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708.



SHARP EDGES ...

The Lansky Sharpener permits you to choose the precise angle you want on your knife blade: 17 degrees for a delicate but razor-sharp edge, 20 degrees, 25 degrees, or 30 degrees for heavy-duty use. Each kit contains, in addition to the holding mechanism and honing oil, five stones of varying coarseness, from extra coarse to ultra-fine. The price is $29.95 for the complete kit, plus $2 for handling, postage and insurance. Spare parts are available. The address for the *Lansky Sharpener* is Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 800, Buffalo, NY 14221.

LITTLE SEE ...

Armament Systems and Procedures is introducing a 3.5-ounce, self-contained, rechargeable nickel-cadmium flashlight (the SEE). The diminutive light measures 4.25 by .62 by .37 inches. The SEE comes with a self-adhesive Velcro strip to allow the light to be carried under a car's dashboard or in an attache case. A switch allows choice of an intense beam or a diffuse red light to prevent reduction of night vision.

The SEE operates continuously for 80 minutes per charge. It can be recharged in any wall outlet by using the self-contained two-prong plug. Price is $16 postage paid from *Armament Systems and Procedures, Inc.*, Dept. SOF, Box 356, Appleton, WI 54912.

VESTED INTEREST ...

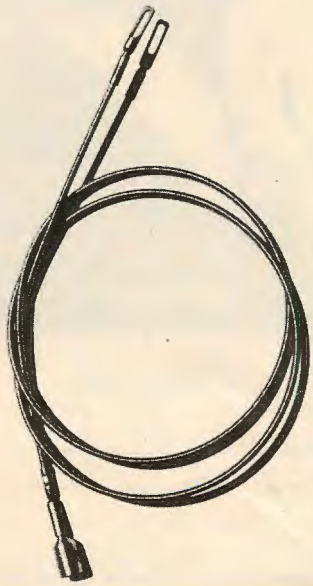
Quartermaster Sales is marketing a lightweight combat vest (less than one pound) of Parapack nylon, using nylon thread with exposed edges heat-sealed. The vest carries the basic 210-rd. combat load (six magazines and one in rifle) in .223 or .308, or 40 12-gauge rounds. (Specify .223 or .308 vest as pouches are cut to fit magazines snugly; because of magazine shape, users of H&K .223 must use .308 vest.) The vest also carries two clips for automatic pistols, and has two canteen holders, a map pocket (inside), two shoulder rings for grenades or knives, first-aid-kit pocket, and holder for ear plugs.

The vest comes in green cammy pattern and uses Velcro fastening throughout. One size adjusts to fit all. Because both sides of the vest carry identical loads (except for the map pocket), the weight is balanced.

The vest is available from *Quartermaster Sales*, Dept. SOF, 7201 Avenida La Costa, NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109. Price is $99.95.

ROD ON THE RUN ...

Flex-Gun Rods Co., Inc. offers a small, portable, efficient cleaning rod for use in the field. Made of flexible-spring cable, each rod has a swivelling ball joint at each end. At one end is a patch-holder; the other end has a holder for cleaning brushes. Designed for pulling from the muzzle through the breech end of a weapon, the Flex-Gun Rod can also be pushed through the breech to clear obstruction from the barrel.



Three models are available: Model CRS (combination rifle-shotgun), 36 inches long, for $9.95; Model R for rifles of any caliber (30 inches long) for $8.95; and Model P for pistols of any caliber (14 inches long) for $7.95. Flex-Gun Rods come coiled in 4½-inch, clear-plastic pouches, but can be coiled down to about two inches for carrying in pockets. These products are available from *Flex-Gun Rods Co., Inc.*, Dept SOF, P.O. Box 202, Dearborn, MI 48121.

COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT

Ken Hackathorn

Continued from page 8

gunsmiths and gun plumbers have set themselves up in the business of turning out "action jobs" on various brands of service revolvers. It is not uncommon to see service revolvers with actions of varying reliability. Some gun periodicals advertise for custom-spring kits to lighten the action of your favorite blaster. BEWARE.

Also, take articles that tell you how to tune your own action at home, by modifying springs and polishing parts, with caution. If all you do with your weapon is shoot at paper targets, these kits may be fine. However, if you carry a service revolver for your own survival, I recommend that you avoid such home remedies. Some years ago I attended the Smith & Wesson armorers' school. Archie Dubia and Johnny Contro, school instructors and master pistolsmiths, both warned against modifying springs in duty revolvers.

I have seen numerous revolvers with super-smooth double-action pulls that would not reliably fire primers every time. For a match gun, you can tune the action to fire your favorite brand of primer or lot of ammo. A duty sidearm must work with any type of ammo you come across. The strain screw on a Smith & Wesson revolver must always be tightened to the limit. NEVER back it off in an effort to gain a lighter double-action pull. The primer must receive a strong blow to fire properly.

The ammo companies are producing more cartridges for commercial sale than ever before, and quality is occasionally less than ideal. I have seen far more failures of factory ammo over the past few years than I would like to admit. Choose your ammo with care, and always test-fire it before you load up for social use.

A couple of decades ago, the factory trigger actions on most good service revolvers were deluxe right out of the box. By simply dry-firing them 500 times, you could burnish the actions to a slick, smooth, double-action pull. Today the factory revolver action may be fine, but, more often than not, it will need some careful tuning for an ideal double-action pull. You should select an armorer who will carefully polish parts and leave the springs at factory specifications. Do not compromise your safety with anything less than positive primer ignition on your sidearm.

IN the July '81 issue of SOF, Matt Fredericks covered the new handguns offered by Smith & Wesson (see "6 New Guns, 2 New Rounds from S&W"). He discussed details of the new L-frame Model 586 Distinguished Combat Magnum at length. At the recent Bianchi Cup pistol tournament, I had an opportunity to shoot the M-586 with both .38-Special and .357-Magnum loads. I was impressed. The L-frame S&W is ideal. Basically, the new-series L-frame .357 Magnum Smiths are the Springfield firm's answer to the Colt Python. The M-586 has about the same size frame as the Python — and the S&W L-frame will fit nicely in a Python holster. The barrel of the M-586 has the same underlug as the Python, minus the ventilated sighting rib. The frame and cylinder sizes are nearly the same.

The kicker is that S&W now has a gun that is half the price of a Python with an action that is still the best in the world. The boys at Colt must be sweating. Maybe they will get hot on a new blaster to keep them in the gun market for a while longer. The S&W M-19/M-66 Combat Magnums have been selling very well for years. Now the L-frame S&W will take the heat off these models, because the new Distinguished Combat Magnum is going to be the hot number for the future. I think I will even have to have one.

For years a few three-inch-barrel, round-butt M-10 and M-13 Military & Police revolvers have shown up in various Smith & Wesson dealers' hands. These were often overruns from overseas orders. The three-inch-barrel M-13 with the round butt comes nearest to being the perfect concealment revolver. The three-inch, heavy-barrel handles well, aligns with a superb sight index and, most important, gives a full-length extractor stroke. The round butt is perfect for most hands and hides well under a coat. The new S&W round-butt combat stocks really make the gun a honey to shoot.

Smith & Wesson has finally considered cataloging this version of the M-10 and M-13 for regular sale. The fixed-sight M&P is the most fight-proven revolver in history. These weapons always shoot right on the mark, and I have yet to fire one that did not shoot better than I can. The M-13, with the three-inch, heavy-barrel and round butt should be the top choice for a social revolver that is also perfect for daily wear. For the money, the Smith & Wesson Military & Police revolver is still the best buy around.

THE MAN
SUCKER-P

"Win if you can, but ALWAYS cheat."

by R.S. McKay

ROMANTIC notions of fair play aside, it is high time that the art of the Sucker Punch receives its due, both because of its philosophy and its track record of success. How many brawls, petty disagreements and insulting remarks have been settled by the quick, unexpected blow that no one knew was coming?

Now, there are a lot of silly notions about taking and returning punches. It is never a good idea to "take" a punch on purpose just to avoid seeming to be the aggressor. Although this type of chivalry is what you read about in books and see on the silver screen, it will, in all probability, put you in a hospital bed.

Even an inexperienced imbecile tanked to the gills can break your ribs, give you an immediate or delayed concussion, or seriously damage your eyes with sloppy, loose-fingered punches. If you let him hit you first and he knocks you down, he might decide he *really* doesn't like you and smash your skull with a nearby chair or other implement of destruction. You wouldn't let a man with a gun have the first shot, now, would you? Of course not.

But a man who cracks your sternum with a beer mug will be only slightly inconvenienced by spending a few hours being booked and then released for assault and battery, while you, Good Sam, will be convalescing quietly in a hospital bed, pondering your navel and the ways of the world from a supine position. So much for storybook chivalry.

Let's move on to "Winner's Rules."

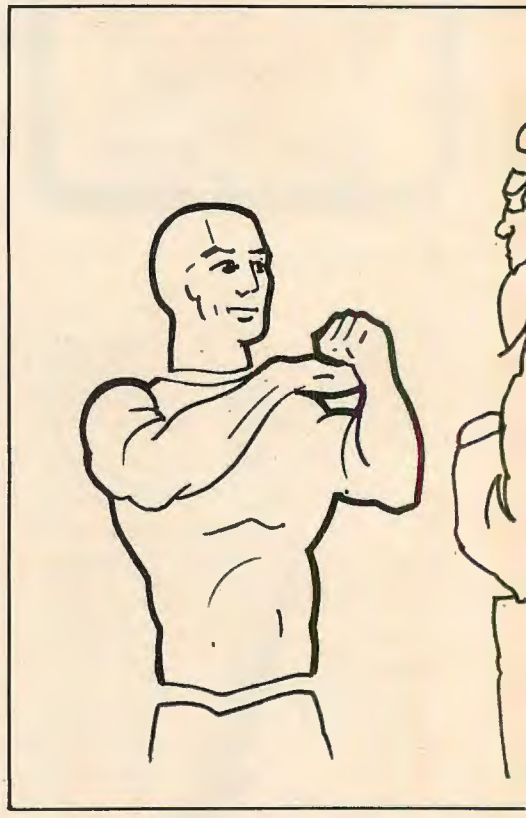
Dojo Ballerina

To become an adequate Sucker-Puncher, you must have a modicum of upper body strength, although it is speed and guile, in unison, that make Sucker-Punching a safe means of ending difficulties. Part of the Sucker-Puncher's facade is his seemingly innocuous demeanor; he doesn't put up his dukes or demonstrate fancy Oriental posturing to inform an opponent of either his expertise or intentions.

I once saw two men argue over a woman near a motel pool. The shorter and stockier of the two, obviously trying to impress his opponent, took up a low Horse Stance, legs spread wide. The other man, an obvious low-brow without extensive training, kicked him immediately in the groin, whereupon he fell backwards into the pool. Do not let the "Dojo Ballerina" scare you. He is often his own worst enemy.

If you are an efficient Sucker-Puncher, you don't dance around like Muhammed Ali, throwing jabs and crosses. Instead, you knock out your opponent with one fast, strong and, above all, *straight* punch, delivered without a wind-up or "telegraph." From a position of apparent non-hostility, you must unleash the full impetus of the torqueing of both your upper and lower body, concentrating a flash of intense power on the opponent's head, the target that will produce maximum results.

Sucker's view of author, .5 second before the punch. Note bored expression, relaxed posture. Nothing much is about to happen . . . Boom!



It follows, then, that on impact, both feet must be on the ground. You do not drive nails into wood while hopping from foot to foot, and you cannot knock a man down with certainty while practicing the footwork you saw on *Wide World of Sports*.

A good Sucker-Puncher must make his assailant believe that he is a wimp who would go to any length to avoid a fight. In fact, chances are that the Sucker-Puncher has tried to avoid trouble, and has failed. There comes a point in any face-to-face confrontation when you realize instinctively which way the shit is about to blow, and it is then that a wily Sucker-Puncher will go to work.

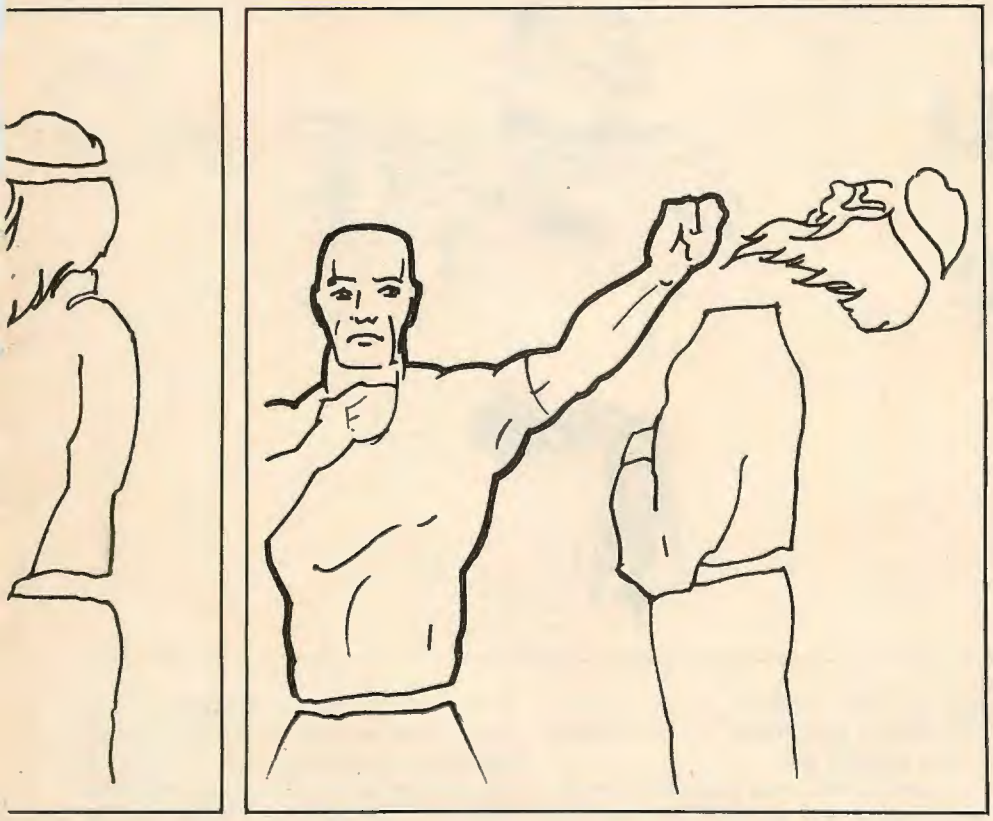
Get Close Enough

Without posturing or telegraphing your intent, try to either lengthen or shorten the gap between you and your assailant to about five feet. The proper distance between you and your target depends on your height and reach, a shorter man hav-

LY ART OF PUNCHING

lose if you must,

-old Yankee proverb



ing to be perhaps a foot closer than a taller man.

Remember, when you move in range to strike, you are also in the unenviable position of being in range for your opponent to strike you. It is therefore imperative that you stay either too close or too far away from him until the moment you intend to strike. This entire process should take from .18 to .30 second — or you are moving too slowly.

Remember, since the hand is quicker than the eye, it will take him at least .4 second to recognize what is coming and prepare to block, which, for him, is too slow to avoid being hit. The greatest advantage of Sucker-Punching is that it does not give an opponent time to block or duck. That's what makes him a Sucker....

A good pre-punch tactic is to keep your assailant talking. This creates a diversion that divides his conscious energy between insulting you and preparing to hit you, and he will probably be concentrating more on what he's saying than on what you're doing. Always punch from your strongest side, if possible.

Boxers use their strongest punch, the rear cross, for knockout power after lighter lead jabs create openings. Sucker-Punching is different: there is no softening-up, although circumstances determine whether you throw a rear strong-side punch or a lead strong-side punch. Sometimes, it may be a disadvantage to use your strong arm. For example, if you are in a bar with your beer mug in your strong hand, setting it down may telegraph your intent to your adversary. Better to throw it in his face or use your weak-side with a beer-mug-to-the-jaw follow-up. Proficiency in punching should include both weak and strong sides.

Forget Boxing Technique

Do not confuse a Sucker-Punch with what, in boxing, is called a "stop-hit." A stop-hit is a blow delivered just as an opponent begins to attack, and is not usually begun until the opponent starts his wind-up. This sort of precise move is highly refined after much time in the ring. It is not a wise idea in the Real World, where such finesse is both unnecessary and dangerous.

In a dimly lit, scuzzy tavern, your opponent's first move could be for a concealed knife or firearm, which would then put you in a much less enviable position for delivering any technique other than a hasty apology. The whole idea is to be the first to the target, and to have to go there only once.

Never give up your "edge." If you telegraph your intent, your opponent will probably put up his hands, making it highly unlikely that you will get an unobstructed shot at his head. Then we have what's called a "flurry," in which there's lots of swingin' and not much hittin'.

In an unarmed confrontation, 90 percent of all you'll need to deal with the situation is a *good* straight punch, delivered along an imaginary line between your nose and the nose of your opponent, this line being called the centerline. It does for punching what sights do for a handgun or rifle; it is your arm's "sight picture." Practicing center-line punching on a focus glove or heavy bag will eventually lead to an instinctive, economically delivered punch that "homes in" on your opponent's nose. Just like a speeding bullet, the arm's fastest and most powerful extension comes from following a straight line. Hence, the term "straight punch." (See "The Punch for the Crunch," SOF, June '81.)

Of course, a drawn gun has a substantial effect on most people's aggressive tendencies, but, sad to say, some law-enforcement agencies and bleeding hearts take a dim view of using a handgun as a deterrent, especially on someone who is not similarly armed. The fact that he started the altercation and that he threatened to reposition your nose a bit closer to your asshole than is presently the

Continued on page 68

RECONS GET UP FOR CHARLIE

"Tonight We Go To The Blue Sashes"

by Major Sam Riley

When the toughest mechanized infantry recon platoon in Vietnam announced, "Tonight, we go to the blue sashes," everybody learned a lesson in no-quarter fighting — particularly "Charlie."

IT was around 0900 on a blistering June day in 1968. I had just returned to our mechanized battalion's base camp at Dau Tieng, where I had attended a brigade operations briefing.

Everyone was worn out, me included. We had just completed 92 days of the toughest fighting in the now-famous '68 Tet offensive. The tracks (the ones we had left) were in terrible shape. The .50-calibers needed new barrels. The line companies were down to 65 percent strength. We had, however, given Charlie and his NVA friends a terrific licking, and, except for fatigue, we were higher than a Georgia pine.

A good night's sleep preceded by several cold beers and a good shower had put me in A-1 shape, so I guess I was a little shocked when I received a land-line call from the brigade commander, ordering me to gather my gear and be at the chopper pad in 30 minutes.

I shook my hung-over driver awake, gathered my necessaries and, in my seldom-used jeep, motored down to the pad.

I knew something was up when the colonel's first words were, "I'm glad you brought your flak vest."

As it turned out, the major commanding our brigade's most remote outpost, Fire Base Green, had been hit during the night and I was to replace him. To compound matters, most of the fighting units using Green as a night laager were out on search-and-destroy missions, information was sketchy as to which ones would be back in tonight and which would not, the odd-socks units at the fire base were worried as hell — and worst of all, Green was located clear the hell to Soui Da — 45 air miles from our base camp.

With no "slick" available, we took off in a Hiller H12 bubbleship with my promise to radio a situation report back to brigade as soon as we got on the ground at Green.

To say that I was worried as we approached the fire base would be an understatement. First of all, from the air I couldn't see enough infantry to even call the place a fire base. Secondly, either their radio was on the blink or no one was manning it.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maj. Sam Riley (a *nom de guerre*) was a Regular Army combat arms officer who fought through the 1968 Tet offensive with mechanized infantry units of the 25th Infantry Division.

He was a platoon leader, a company commander and an S3 of a combat infantry battalion.

Prior to and during Tet '68, Maj. Riley was awarded two Bronze Stars, a Purple Heart, three Army Commendation Medals, an Air Medal, the Vietnamese Cross of Valor — and was serving with a mech infantry battalion when it earned a Presidential Unit Citation.

He resigned from the Regular Army in the early '70s to pursue a business career.

(Editor's Note: Because SOF prefers to illustrate its articles with photos taken by its authors, to lend authenticity, Managing Editor Jim Graves called former Maj. Riley. The conversation amused both parties.)

Graves: "Mr. Riley. I just wanted to call and let you know that I enjoyed your story and that we have accepted it for our October issue. I also wanted to ask if you might happen to have any photos taken that day or of the recon platoon that wore the blue sashes."

Riley: "Pictures? I'll tell you no one was taking pictures that day. I took all kinds of photographs in Vietnam, every time I got a chance, but we were playing with tight assholes that night."

Oh well, it doesn't hurt to try.

SOF readers can also expect more stories from Riley in the future, as he has agreed to become a contributor. With or without photos, Riley's stories make good reading.

When we put down (with no communications and no smoke), the situation was worse than I thought. We had roughly two platoons of leg infantry, pieces of two eight-inch batteries, part of the support platoon from our sister mech battalion, one bulldozer with driver and one engineer lieutenant — in short, our ass was out the window five miles.

I held the chopper until I could write out a message to the Brigade CO asking for ammunition, a decent radio and an artillery liaison officer (LNO) who would know which units could shoot for us. The engineer lieutenant told me that we were due to receive two mech companies and their recon platoon before dark, so I put him on our one working radio and told him to get in contact with the nearest of the two companies and to monitor their push without interruption.

After getting the two leg platoons to pull in and man a tight perimeter, we got to work with the bulldozer.

That young engineer dozer operator was a jewel. I wish I could remember his name. With me riding the shotgun seat and a couple of legs with M16s also aboard, we cut about 40 good defilade track positions for what we hoped would be a full night laager.

Although we joked while we worked, we all knew that if the NVA units which had hit the base the night before were to return before our own mech forces, our butts would be in one large sling.

As the afternoon wore on with one mech company in contact and the other company moving to join them, our real worry became: "Can they get here before dark?"

The resupply choppers came okay. The artillery LNO came from Tay Ninh. Finally, just before dusk, the mech recon platoon leader radioed that his units were on the way. He seemed pleased when I told him that they could move into prepared positions from march column.

The few of us in Fire Base Green would look at the tree line, look up at the rapidly approaching dusk, then look apprehensively to the northeast from which the tracks must come.

I'll have to admit that the rooster tail of dust from that lead track coming in was one of the prettiest sights I ever saw.

With the recon platoon in the lead, 30-plus diesel M113s moved into Fire Base Green.

"We *want* Charlie to hit us."

The first indicator that we had ourselves one fine recon platoon was the way they moved their tracks into position. An average mech unit simply drives the tracks into position much the same as they would do in a training exercise at Fort Hood. These studs positively *slammed* their APCs into the defilade cuts. With no fuss or bother, every crew started checking tracks and sprockets, started wiping down the .50-calibers, sandbagged the front slopes, unboxed ammo and started asking about fuel and chow. About half of them were armed with very clean AK-47s.

I coordinated with the two mech company commanders, repositioned the four eight-inch tubes and then decided to take a complete walking tour of the perimeter before full dark.

When I came to the portion of the perimeter manned by the recon platoon, I was dumbfounded to see the platoon leader and his men tying dirty blue-rayon sashes around their waists over jungle fatigues. I had seen strange things done by American combat troops, but this took the cake.

I walked up to the platoon leader, a husky, blond young officer from Wisconsin, and asked him what the hell was going on. In a most businesslike manner he told me a story that to this day sends cold chills down my back.

"Sir," he said, "this recon platoon has fought without a break since the Tet offensive started in February. I have been hit twice, and we have taken more than 100 percent casualties in the platoon.

"A few weeks ago, we were the outfit sent to the rescue of an infantry platoon trapped in the Cau Dai temple in Tay Ninh. When we got to them, there wasn't much left. The troops had been literally hacked to pieces by the NVA, and I held the platoon leader, who was a friend, in my arms until he bled to death.

"Sir, I guess my guys and I kind of went crazy at that point. Let it suffice to say that we flat cleaned that temple out.

"A few days later, when ripping through a hamlet we 'came by' a big bunch of this blue cloth. Since then, when things get us down or get what we call 'serious,' we go to the blue sashes, which means we *want* Charlie to hit us ... In fact we invite *anybody* to hit us.

"Today we lost the platoon sergeant. He was dusted off, but looked to me like he probably wouldn't make it. I looked around a few minutes ago and saw one of my squad leaders tying on his blue sash. I tied mine on, and so did everybody else.

"Is there anything else, sir?"

I frankly couldn't think of anything to say, so I moved on back to the CP bunker to wait for Charlie to hit us.

We didn't have to wait long.

First, an LP (Listening Post) reported movement. Lots of it. Then a few incoming mortar rounds. Then an enemy soldier blew up a track with what turned out to be an RPG-7.

The shit had hit the fan.

The next thing I knew, an NVA regiment was streaming out of the tree line.

From that point on, things are a little hard to remember. We called in artillery from every battery in range. We got gunships from Tay Ninh. Near the end of the scrap, we were firing direct-fire from the eight-inch guns.

As was rather common with Charlie during those months, he let us alone in the daytime when we were spread all over the place, then hit us at night when we were laagered tight and ready for him.

The body count in that action is a matter of record. Charlie took a licking that the few survivors won't ever forget.

The area in front of that blue-sashed recon platoon was unbelievable. There were bodies and pieces of bodies positively piled in front of those recon tracks. If any NVA soldier got into the recon positions, he didn't get out.

With first light and the arrival of the deluge of senior officers, I checked the whole line again.

When I got to the recon positions, I found a fine platoon of American fighting men calmly trying to put things back in order and "come back down" from a tough action. No blue sashes — no fuss — no bother.

I thanked and congratulated the recon platoon leader on an outstanding fighting performance.

His stonefaced answer? "Ain't no big thing, sir."

PAYCHECK SOLDIERS

"MOVE on! That's all the cartridges you get. Hurry up! We hit the village in 11 minutes!"

It was midafternoon, the hottest part of the day. Sweat streaked the faces of both the sunburned American and the black Ibo soldier. The Ibo closed his palms around the 18 cartridges he had just been issued and gave way to the next man in line.

Nick Bishop, 29, formerly of Pittsburgh, Pa., impatiently blinked his stinging, gray-green eyes, but he couldn't spare a hand to wipe the sweat out of them. Two dozen more soldiers of Biafra's Fourth Commando Brigade, barefoot, lacking uniforms, were waiting for him to count out their ammunition.

The ammo had been late coming up. It had arrived only a few minutes ago in a camouflaged Land Rover. A few feet away from Bishop, one of the black officers was handing out .30-caliber machine-gun ammunition belts as if they were golden wampum.

Birds squawked and giggled overhead. A dark-brown lizard rhythmically raised and lowered its body as if it were doing pushups, scanning the thick, bone-dry brush for insects.

Target Village

The prey of the Fourth Commandos was up the trail ahead: the village of Umuneke. It was held by the Nigerians this week, but Bishop and the other white mercenaries had instructions to retake it for the secessionist West African government that called itself Biafra.

Bishop checked his watch tensely. Timing was important. They had asked for a bombing run from the single, battered B-26 that at the time constituted the entire Biafran air force. The attack had to be underway by the time the bomber arrived, but the British "major" who was in charge of the strike force hadn't returned. He had sneaked off base a half hour earlier with a handful of picked men to infiltrate the rear of the village and set up the electronically-detonated land mines that were among his favorite bits of strategy. The objective was simple: drive the Nigerian soldiers back onto the mines, then explode them.

The Britisher, C.C. Watson, appeared in the brush four minutes before three o'clock, another incongruous white face among the short, black Ibo tribesmen. Bishop had finished the cartridge distribution. He had been watching the lizard, trying not to think. Sure, he was nervous before an attack. But hell, what normal man wouldn't be?

Watson gestured to him. "The kettles are set," the Britisher muttered, referring to the homemade land mines whipped together from cooking utensils and explosives and christened Ojukwu kettles.

During Congo rebellion of 1960s, Siegfried Mueller was one of first mercs to sign on in South Africa. Here Mueller, former SS officer, wears Iron Cross outside mercenary HQ in Kamina. Photo: Wide World

"Get the men up on the line. It's time to move in."

Bishop nodded and took his troops off to an assigned position on the left flank. Another white officer — a tall, sandy-haired Rhodesian with a smashed nose — went to the right. Watson and the black officers headed up the main body in the center.

At straight-up three o'clock, Watson blew a shrill blast on that damned whistle he always carried and the first line of the Fourth Commandos started in. Sharp bursts of automatic gunfire erupted from the village, aimed blindly in the general direction of the whistle.

The lizard was gone in a flash. The birds screamed in fright and wheeled away. To Bishop's left, an incoming mortar round splintered a scrawny palm tree. Two soldiers were hit. One of them spun around, already dead, his fingers jerking reflexively at his rifle trigger. An Ibo commando paused over the body only long enough to strip the spare cartridges from the dead man's pocket.

The men in Bishop's group held their fire nervously. No sense in wasting ammunition until you could see what you were shooting at. They continued through the thick brush, stumbling toward the village. Then came the sound Bishop had been waiting for: the whine of ancient radial engines as the Biafran B-26 sputtered into range. A couple of the men in his group looked skyward in panic.

Hastily, Bishop reassured them, "Don't worry! It's ours!"

Bombs Away!

Above, another American mercenary concentrated on controlling the shimmy of the obsolete, ungainly two-engine attack bomber while his navigator, a young Ibo lieutenant, excitedly congratulated himself on guiding the plane to the proper village at the proper time — at least he was relatively sure it was the proper village. The pilot, 300-pound Barry "Hawg" McWhorter, 42, took his word for it. He made his run.

Bishop's Ibo troops cheered frantically as three of the four bombs dropped by the plane exploded within the Nigerian lines at the front of the village. The plane wobbled in a wide circle for a second run. This time there was trouble. Of the second batch of four bombs, only one exploded. The others hit the ground. While Bishop waited, cringing, for the thunderclap, they only bounced, then bounced again, harmlessly.

As the creaking plane surged past the village and the dust cleared, the Nigerian federals resumed their squall of small-arms fire. But the sound was weaker. The bombs had taken a toll. One more bombing run — if the antiquated Biafran bombs would work — and this attack could be a shoo-in.

But when Bishop looked up for the plane, he saw it turn tail and run, heading

Close-up of Modern Mercs

by Marc Segal

Rolf Steiner pauses from command of Biafran army brigade in 1968. Steiner was top merc of savage civil war in which American Nick Bishop led Ibo troops of Biafra's 4th commando. Photo: Wide World

back to the airstrip. He shook his fist at the disappearing, fat, minnow-shaped bomber. "You lousy sonofabitch!" he roared. "Two lousy runs! What kind of air cover is that?" But he knew in his heart it had to get the hell out; the Nigerians had MiGs prowling the sky.

Move In!

His men were looking at him, their black faces gray with shock. Bishop quickly controlled himself. He checked to make sure his Thompson was on semiautomatic. Even officers didn't have much ammo. "I've never seen a war yet that didn't have to be won on the ground," he drawled, trying to keep the tension out of his voice. "Okay, so it's our turn. Let's get in there!"

It was 1968.

The occasion was the height of one of the most devastating civil wars in modern history, which ended in frenzied raping and looting by the victorious Nigerians in early 1970.

Mercenary Breed

The foreign mercenaries — Bishop, Watson, McWhorter and others — are part of the incurable breed of man that 100 years ago made names like Wyatt Earp, Doc Holiday and Bat Masterson synonymous with the bloody violence of the Old West. They are the *lobos* who lay their lives on the line for money.

Scratch the international skin of the modern world's hired guns and you'll find American ex-GIs who long for excitement, Sahara-scorched French veterans of the SAO (Secret Army Organization) uprising in Algeria, tough Britishers whose shrinking empire left them without any wars to fight, Belgians, Germans, white Rhodesians and South Africans, disenfranchised Cubans, Chinese Nung fighters and even CIA operatives on Company time.

These men follow a trade that seems immune to the tides of inflation, recession or unemployment. Since the end of WWII, there have been over 51 wars and rebellions around the globe from which to choose, many of them running concurrently. Favorite sites are the freebooting lands of the Caribbean, the Mideast and, currently, Africa, where a sputtering chain of revolutions has provided jobs for mercenaries over the last decade.

The long, dirty Biafran war was unique in that it was really two wars: one for political control and one against hunger, with a powder-keg of mercenaries fighting for all sides on all fronts.

On the well-equipped Nigerian side, Egyptians and other mercenaries flew Soviet and British-supplied planes in air attacks that, since they did not risk flying low enough to ensure accuracy, often dropped stray bombs on Biafran hospitals and schools.

One of these slay-for-pay pilots, known as the "Intruder," made a specialty of hanging around Biafra's one beleaguered airstrip in a twin-engine Ilyushin waiting for the incoming Red Cross mercy flights. He was also called "Genocide" by the harassed mercy fliers, due to his habit of breaking in on radio chatter to taunt: "This is genocide, baby. Come on down and get killed."

On the Biafran side, mercenaries of every description floated in and out. Freelance fighters like Hawg McWhorter and Nick Bishop stayed longer than most, and they were supplemented by brief visits from such luminaries as Swedish nobleman Count Carl Gustaf von Rosen, who created a sort of instant air force for the near-planeless Biafrans during his summer vacation. He brought with him a group of four men and five second-hand MFI-98 Swedish trainers so heavily loaded down with extra fuel tanks, rockets in wing-pods and radio compasses that experts pronounced them "technically unable to fly." They did fly and flew well. In their first three raids they caught on the ground and bagged four MiGs, one Ilyushin 28, two Canberras, a Heron and a control tower.

In the war against hunger, so-called "neutral" mercenaries — a well-paid, hybrid group of Swedes, Finns, Americans, one Yorkshireman and one Scot, flew mercy flights under the cover of darkness for the Red Cross and church groups. They brought medicine and food for the starving Biafran civilian population. And more than once, according to the Nigerians, they also ran in loads of arms for the Biafran military.

When they weren't playing tag with Nigerian fighter planes, they swilled beer in the relative safety of their home base on the island of Sao Tome and, if they were sure their ecclesiastical employers were out of earshot, spent their time cursing the Intruder and scheming to sneak guns aboard their planes so they could "shoot that bastard's ass to kingdom come." They never did.

Rolf Steiner: Number One

But the number-one mercenary in the Biafran war was Rolf Steiner, the brigade commander under whom Bishop and the others fought.

Steiner, a 38-year-old ex-Foreign Legion sergeant, was typical of men who spend most of their lives in war zones. A man who likes cleanliness, beer, violence and very little else, he got his first taste of the excitement that comes with danger as a Hitler Youth skirmishing in Germany's last-ditch defense against the advancing U.S. Army. After the German surrender, he enlisted in the French Foreign Legion and adopted for his own its motto of "Long live death, long live war!"

Steiner spent seven years in Indochina — where he lost a lung at Dien Bien Phu — then five years in Algeria. He broke away from the Legion for a short spell to join the terroristic SAO. He got a sus-

ABOVE: Mercenaries employed by Congo government advance cautiously on building in Kindu where rebels put up last-ditch defense in 1964. Weapons are 7.62mm FNs. RIGHT: Count Carl Gustaf von Rosen is interviewed on return from Biafra in 1969. Swedish count brought in men and airplanes to help Biafran air force battle Nigerian troops. BELOW: South African mercenary and Congolese army lieutenant examine captured Russian-made RPG-2. Photos: Wide World

pended sentence for his activities and moved to Paris, where he was living when he got wind of the Biafra blowup. It only took him a couple of months to make colonel (though he had never risen above the rank of sergeant in his prior military service).

Biafran troops and the mercenaries he hired found him a tough taskmaster, with a tendency to shoot off his Browning whenever he wanted attention, to rant at them, even to throw plates at them or kick them if his temper was up. But they followed him because they considered him a winner and because he had *juju* (good luck).

Steiner's early successes in Biafra were not, he thinks, the result of good luck, but rather a case of poor soldiering on the part of the Nigerians.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marc Segal is a free-lance writer living in Philadelphia. He concentrates his writing on crime and military affairs, and has made several trips to Europe and the Middle East to gather information for possible articles in his field.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in history and political science from Rider College and is currently working on his Master's degree in criminal justice at Temple University in Philadelphia.

As well as being a certified Emergency Medical Technician, Segal has worked as an investigator for the Philadelphia Department of Public Health and teaches history in the Philadelphia school district.

—John Metzger

He scoffed, "If any corporal serving under me in the Legion had taken more than a week to conquer West Africa with the excellent equipment the Nigerians had, I'd have had him shot for dereliction of duty."

But Nigeria's superior equipment prevailed, and by the time the war had ended, Steiner's mercenaries had cleared out. Not only had they seen the dismal handwriting on the wall, but paydays — which had been sporadic at best — were almost nonexistent. The mercs cut out while the cutting was good. It's standard practice when pay stops. After three years in jail in Khartoum, Sudan, Steiner was released through the intercession of the West German government.

A long-time veteran of the African mercenary wars once put it, "Glory, hell! I fight for money." Is money really the chief lure? And does free-lance fighting really pay so much?

Sometimes, yes, especially for pilots. Fliers always get first grab at any war's dollars, dinars, pesos or pounds. A squad

of former RAF pilots who called themselves the "Dangerous Dozen" flew jet fighters for Saudi Arabia during the Yemen uprising to the tune of $2,800 a month. Record salary-holder is an ex-American Air Force lieutenant who won the Distinguished Flying Cross in Korea: Allen Lawrence Pope. For piloting a black-painted bomber against Indonesia's President Sukarno in the ill-fated 1958 rebellion, he got $10,000 per month.

He also collected a broken thigh when anti-aircraft fire blasted him out of the sky during a bombing run, plus two years in an Indonesian jail after he was fished out of a palm tree when his parachute failed. During his trial, one Indonesian faction claimed his salary was paid not by the rebels but by the Central Intelligence Agency.

Flying High

The CIA remains a busy boss for fliers whose business is war. Exiled Cuban pilots went on its payroll in the Congo war, flying air support in old B-26 and T-28 fighter-bombers. The late U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers — who pulled down $2,500 a month — was one of two dozen CIA pilots who silently overflew Russia on spy-in-the-sky missions.

At the other end of the scale from these super-pilots is unlucky Bobby Joe Keesee of Phoenix, Ariz., dubbed by columnist Jack Anderson as the "Soldier of Misfortune." Keesee was forced down by Cuban MiG-15s after parachuting two anti-Castro guerrilla leaders onto Cuban soil. Keesee climbed from his rented, single-engine Piper Comanche to face a Cuban enlisted man toting a Kalashnikov assault rifle, and he promptly claimed he had flown to Cuba to seek political asylum.

After 49 days in a Castro prison, he was returned to the United States, where he claimed his request for asylum had been a hoax, and that all the time he had been working for the CIA. If so, he apparently wasn't paid very well. He ended up pumping gas at a service station in Phoenix until the call of adventure lured him into another global hotspot — this time the Middle East.

In June 1970, he took off for the Middle East and, unlucky as always, was promptly grabbed by Black September guerrillas and held hostage during the shootout between the guerrillas and Hussein's battle-hardened Bedouin troops.

Sliding Pay

The pay scale fluctuates for ground troops also. In Vietnam — the first war in the history of the United States in which we signed on mercenaries to help us with the fighting — Montagnard and Cambodian tribesmen (described by one U.S. officer as "the biggest bunch of thugs and hoodlums in the country — but at least they fight for us, not against us") received $40 a month, plus bonuses for weapons captured from the communists.

ABOVE: Maj. Michael Hoare (right), commander of 5th Congo Brigade, prepares to lead attack on Stanleyville, rebel stronghold, in 1964. Trooper holds older model FN. Photo: Wide World

LEFT: Austin Young, after being freed from Cuban jail in 1963. Photo: UPI

BELOW: Mercenaries and Katangese gendarmes regroup for thrust on Congolese northeast border town in 1967. Rifles are FNs. Photo: Wide World

The Congo's gung-ho white freebooters didn't do much better; they put their lives on the line for a base pay of 130 pounds sterling ($364) per month, facing wild-eyed Simba rebels whose minds were fortified with bhang, a hashish-like intoxicant.

Take the case of Nick Bishop. Before he showed up in Biafra, he spent 1965 and 1966 fighting in the Congo under the legendary Maj. Michael Hoare for that $364 pittance, getting an extra $16-a-day "combat pay" when he was actually in the war zone. Later, when he went to Biafra, he claims his monthly paycheck rose to $1,700 a month.

But he says, "That was low, man, low. Some of the guys made a hell of a lot more. One guy I buddied with for a while, Goosens, was taking in $4,000 a month.

Who was Goosens?

"A Belgian, I think."

What was Goosens' full name?

"Just Goosens. That's all he called himself. You don't ask."

What became of him?

"What do you think? He caught one. The Ibos tried to bring him out on foot, but he didn't make it. I guess it wouldn't have mattered if they had gotten him out; there were never any doctors around anyway. There never are. Hell, that's why I left. I was wounded four times in six days before I left Biafra. Once in the knee. I've been having trouble with it ever since."

Was that in Umuneke?

"No, this was later. That time in Umuneke, everything turned out all right. The Nigerians missed the mines old Watson had spent so much time setting up, but they went scooting out the other side of the village as we moved in. It was all over by dusk."

ABOVE: Two mercs check out 9mm Browning automatic in Leopoldville before joining comrades fighting Congo rebels in 1964. Photo: Wide World

BELOW: Bobby Joe Keesee (left) leaves U.S. court in 1975 after being sentenced to 20 years in federal prison for his plea of guilty to conspiracy in the unsolved kidnap-murder of U.S. Vice Consul John S. Patterson in Hermosillo, Mexico. Keesee, the only person charged in connection with the 1974 disappearance and murder of the American diplomat, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to kidnap in exchange for a government pledge to prevent his extradition to Mexico in connection with the case. Photo: UPI

Where then was Bishop wounded?

"After we lost Aba. The Nigerian artillery cut us to pieces in that one. I was still carrying shell fragments when I hitched a ride on one of the mercy planes. You'll never guess who the pilot was. That fat slob McWhorter. He'd quit Steiner by then and gone to work for one of those churches. They paid more. Five thousand a month he said. I didn't know he was the one who did that crummy little bombing run at Umuneke until later. He told me about it over a whiskey breakfast after he got me to Sao Tome. We had a good laugh over it."

What ever happened to McWhorter after the Biafran war ended?

"Old Hawg? The last I heard he found himself another fight, a little feud they call a civil war up in Chad.

"The French Foreign Legion went in back in 1969, the first time they'd had any fighting in about 10 years. Do you know what they say that fat old sonofabitch was doing? He was flying a helicopter. It gets 115 degrees and better there in that desert, so they say old Hawg swoops in, see, and airdrops those bottles of chilled Mercier 1962 brut wine to the Legion guys when they camp for the night. The Legion has changed, eh? We had it tougher in Biafra. In the Congo, too."

Was Bishop also wounded in the earlier Congo skirmish?

"No, I was lucky there. Like in Vietnam. I was in Vietnam in the Army in '63 and part of '64. The most I ever got was dysentery. I guess my luck caught up with me in Biafra."

Why did he go to Biafra?

Continued on page 74

FRONT-BREAK HOLSTERS

Police-Duty Detail

Text & Photos by
Sgt. Gary Paul Johnston

LEFT: Weapon cannot be yanked out of Rogers' "Bobs" holster — gives officer valuable reaction time. RIGHT. Bianchi's new "Hurricane" has partial front-break design.

WHEN one compares today's standards of policework to those of the past, he realizes that being a police officer 30 or 40 years ago must have been simple. Anyone with a decade of being a cop under his or her belt is aware of the increasing sophistication of police work and its continuing growth to meet a complex society's future problems.

Police equipment, too, has evolved with the times. Today's officer has a multitude of styles to choose from in virtually every category. This variety may be confusing, for while much of the equipment at the local cop shop is well designed and of high quality, many products (firearms included) are what I call "police toys" — things designed for cops, but not by cops, and none of them come cheaply.

Of particular interest to a policeman should be his uniform duty holster. The new officer will probably be issued his or her first holster, and it may or may not be acceptable. When the officer eventually wants or has to replace it, he will find a virtual mountain of rigs to select from.

Prior to your shelling out a minimum of $25 — and more likely $50 — for a holster which may turn out to be wrong for you, I suggest that you shell out $10 for a book about holsters. I refer to *Blue Steel and Gun Leather,* by John Bianchi of Bianchi Gun Leather, Dept. SOF, 100 Calle Cortez, Temecula, CA 92390 (see SOF's review, September '79). From this book you will learn almost everything you ever wanted to know about holsters, but didn't know who to ask, plus some interesting history of the "old West."

Bianchi hadn't written the book when I became a policeman. I was issued a swivel-flap holster in the academy, and was miserable with it. I purchased several more holsters in a short time, and found the same basic faults with them that Bianchi writes of. I was on my way to becoming the holster collector he describes in his book, but not by choice!

A police duty holster must, more than ever before, provide three things: quick access, security and comfort. Many holsters provide one, or two, of these features. They may be suitable for activities such as hunting, back-up work or parades. They may have even sufficed for police work 30 or 40 years ago; they will not suffice today. Today's officer must be able to draw his sidearm instantly from a snapped holster and replace it just as quickly in order to go over a fence after a suspect, and not have the gun fall out in the process.

When I first protested about inadequate police holsters to a friend years ago, he agreed with me and went to *his* holster collection.

"Try this," he said, handing me a well-used holster. "It's a 'Berns-Martin.' It locks the gun in until you tilt it forward; then the front opens and it's in your hand. Shove it back in, and it's locked again."

"Yeah," I said, "but it's funny lookin'."

The Berns-Martin was a departure from conventional rigs, but did everything it was supposed to do. Although it was out of production, John Bianchi recognized the value of its front-break design, and introduced his own improved version, patented as the "Break Front." I bought one of the early ones and carried it for quite a while.

Draw Your Own

During the past 15 years or so, the front-break holster has evolved considerably. John Bianchi's original Break Front has been further improved, and he and other holster makers have added other front-break designs to their lines. As with fast cars and fighter planes, most of these models have "macho" names to go with them.

Bianchi's "The Judge" is a versatile, completely open front-break variation now in wide use, and the company's "Hurricane" is a partial front break. Bianchi also makes a front-break duty holster for the Colt Government Model family of auto loaders called the "Autodraw."

Bucheimer Clark, Dept. SOF, 25562 Avenue Stanford, Valencia, CA 91335, has also marketed a successful front-break holster for some time. Called the "Front-draw," it is available for revolvers and auto loaders.

I have used most makes and models of front-break duty holsters over the years, and have tried nearly all of those offered by the major holster companies; they are all well-made and designed—if somewhat different in application — and I have found all of them comfortable to wear.

The front-break design that excites me most, however, has come from a company relatively new to the holster business: Rogers Holsters, Dept. SOF, 10601 Theresa Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32216. Named the "Boss," this holster is part of an impressive line of plainclothes, com-

Continued on page 83

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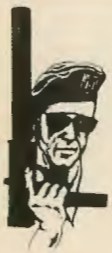

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GEARING UP FO

R THE FUTURE

SOF Interviews USMC's Development Director

Text & Photos by Marv Wolf

Maj. Gen. Alfred M. Gray, Jr.

MAJOR General Alfred M. Gray, Jr., is director of the Marine Development Center, and Deputy for Commanding General of the Marine Corps Development Education Command at Quantico. His responsibilities include development of new doctrine, tactics, techniques and equipment for the Marine Corps of the future. He was interviewed by SOF's West Coast Contributing Editor Marv Wolf at the Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, 29 Palms, Calif.

SOF: Why has the Marine Corps suddenly begun studying armored tactics, doctrine and equipment?
GRAY: We haven't done it "suddenly." The Marine Corps' interest in armor, including tracked vehicles and light tanks, antedates Guadalcanal. However, when we did a number of studies of armor in late 1969-1970, it immediately became clear that we needed to improve our tactical mobility. And we needed to improve our firepower for the immediate future. Our analysis of developments around the globe — the Arab-Israeli war in 1973, for example — confirmed our conclusions.

Consequently, for almost the entire decade of the '70s, we've been looking at light-armored vehicles, ideas and tactics. In 1976, we published the first requirement document, saying that the helicopter force should be supported by some kind of Mobile Protected Weapons System (MPWS).

SOF: How does the Marine mission differ in use of armor from what the Army has been doing for all these years? Why do you need something different?
GRAY: The difference is that the Marine Corps has to be able to carry out amphibious operations. The Army's philosophy of equipment and organization includes support units and some items of equipment that are simply too heavy for us. We're structured differently than the Army. We're built on the philosophy of being able to task-organize, to put together measured forces anywhere on the globe to do what needs doing. Because we're structured differently, our doctrine, tactics and techniques have to be different.

Our employment of armor is similar in many ways to that of the Army, and many people think it is identical, but it isn't. The Marine Corps has to be light enough to get where it wants to go, but heavy enough to win. Some of the Army's equipment is simply too heavy for us, and some of their philosophy of armor just doesn't suit our job.

Whenever we can, we have joint programs with the Army. Sometimes they take the lead. I have hand-picked Marines from my organization in every Army laboratory, in every training and doctrine activity. We work together — but our needs are not always the same. Our mission is the conduct of the amphibious assault and subsequent operations ashore, and it's our job to make sure we get the right equipment. This is why I've recommended that we get the kind of LAVs (Light Armored Vehicles) that I believe are essential for the future role of the Marine Corps.

SOF: How does the Marine Corps differ in use of armor?
GRAY: We emphasize war of maneuver — mobility. We don't believe in attrition warfare. We believe in being much more versatile and flexible than the enemy. Armor is a good ground-gainer. Our whole Marine philosophy is not only to land where the enemy is

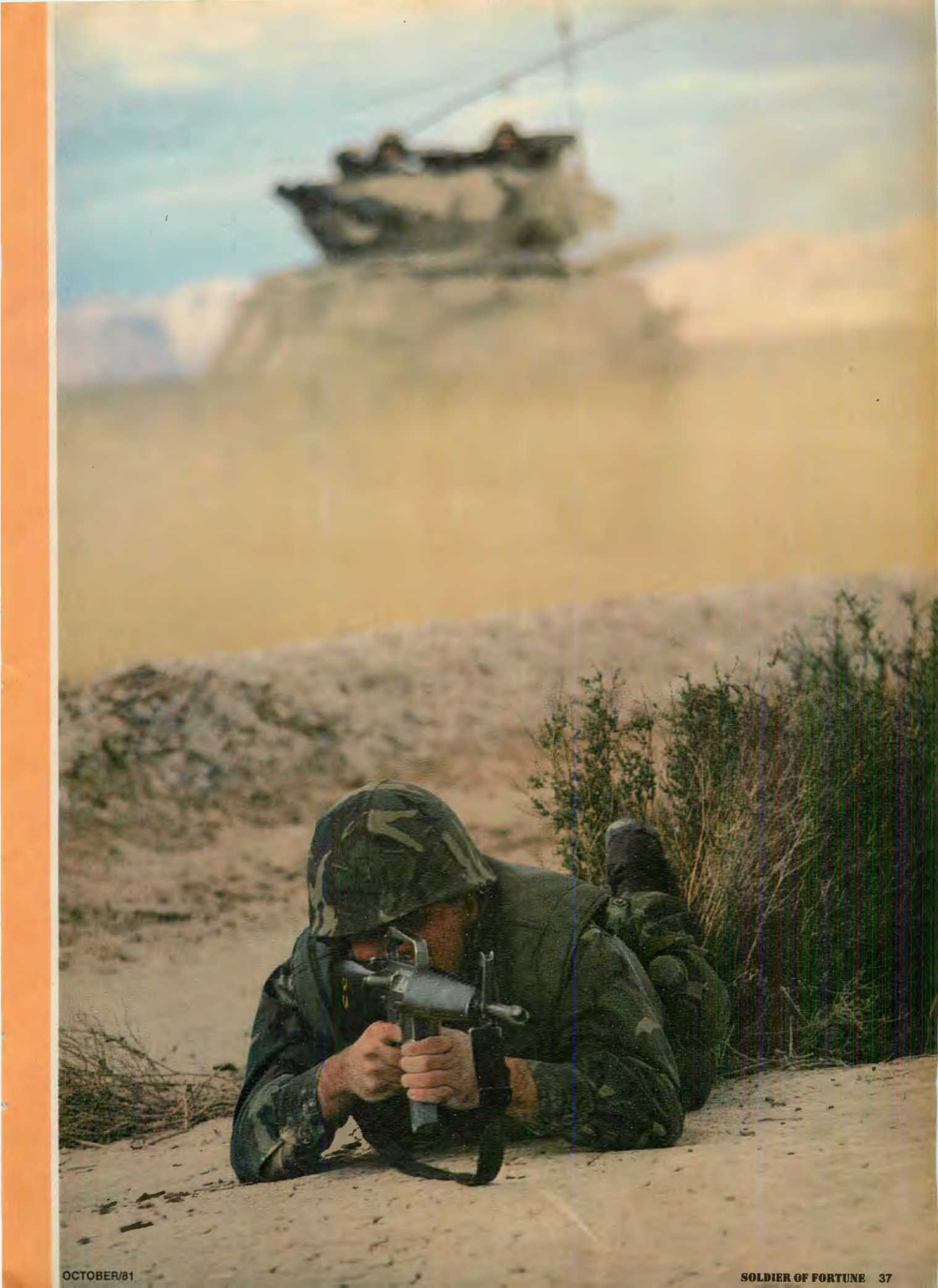
Marine Corps armor has to be light enough to get where it wants to go, but heavy enough to win.

ABOVE: Marine prepares to throw smoke grenade.

RIGHT: Marine with M16A1 maneuvering with armor.

ABOVE: Cougar with 76mm gun and smoke-grenade launchers.

RIGHT: Cougar on the move.



not, and keep em off balance, but we're also very much used to landing and being outnumbered initially. We have to build up our combat power from nothing ashore to whatever is needed to win. For these and other reasons we have to develop our own doctrine. There are cases, of course, in which we have joint doctrine with the other services, and we are prepared to fight as part of a team.

SOF: Why are you looking at wheeled LAVs instead of tracked vehicles? Can't tracks handle rougher terrain?

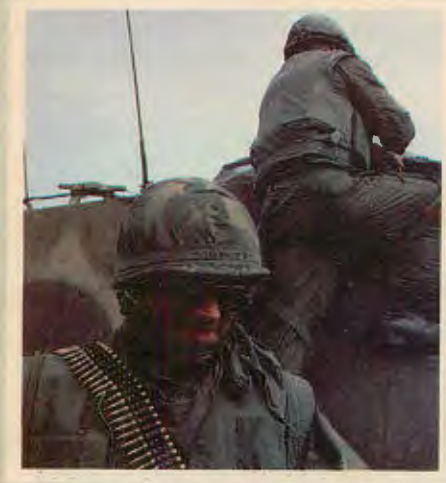
GRAY: We have not ruled out adaptation of tracked vehicles, but we have had a lot of arguments on the issue of wheels versus tracks. In my personal view — and I'm just one person, remember — it isn't a question

of wheeled versus tracked LAVs. We need both tracks and wheels. We have tracks; we have tanks and amphibious-assault vehicles. But we need a light-armored wheeled vehicle to broaden our capability.

I view the fleet Marine forces in the Atlantic and Pacific as reservoirs of combined arms. When you reach into that reservoir, you pull out the capability you need for the particular job you're given. I want to add to that reservoir with a good, flexible, light-armored vehicle, and I'd like to have it wheeled because I think it will give us a helluva lot more flexibility. I also think it's more cost-effective.

SOF: How many LAVs do you anticipate buying and where will they go?

GRAY: We'll buy 742 LAVs. One-third will go to 7th MAF [Marine Amphibious Fleet], one-third to the Pacific and one-third to the Atlantic.



ABOVE: Marine with ammo belt beside LVT P7.

RIGHT: Grizzly with grenade launchers replacing machine gun.

LEFT: M60 tank with LVT P7 in background.

The idea is to be able to put together a good light-armored task force in each of the maritime prepositioned brigades so that all three brigades will have mechanized forces.

We'll have three mobile assault brigades that will also be Marine amphibious brigades. They'll be mechanized and heavy in armor to engage in mechanized warfare. I wish we could come up with a better term than mechanized — it doesn't exactly describe what we're doing, but until we find a better word it will have to do.

SOF: Once the Corps has the LAVs, will you further increase mechanization?

GRAY: I can give you my opinion, but remember this is just Al Gray talking: I'm too junior to make policy and too senior to make coffee. I'd like to see a Marine air-ground logistics team of brigade size, maybe 15,000 or 16,000 men, with a tank battalion, a regimental landing team — you could call it a regimental combat team or a reinforced regiment, with three maneuver elements — and enough amphibious-assault vehicles to carry one or two battalions to give us surface-assault and land-fighting capability inland. I would also like to have one or two LAV battalions to move the heliborne force.

In other words, I'd like to have one-third LAV, two-thirds amphibious-assault vehicles, and all of it fully mobile in tactical vehicles, and all of the heliborne force, including the LAVs, able to move by helicopter. That's why I've insisted that the Mobile Protected Weapons System stay down around 14½ or 15 tons: so that we can move it anywhere on the battlefield. And I think we're going to get such a force despite Army rumors to the contrary. But it will take a little time.

SOF: We understand there's some nasty infighting going on at the highest levels about overlapping roles in the RDF. For example, who owns the air space over the battlefield used by Marine airwings? Who controls the tactical air battle?

GRAY: I don't know that there's any nasty infighting, but these questions have been an issue for years. The current joint doctrine and plans for unified command, worked out after years of careful examination, experience and trials, are perfectly adequate, in my view.

The Marine air-ground logistics team is the way to do it. We have everything integrated. For example, we have our own air support, a vital part of our firepower. I would give up part of my tanks or artillery.

We have the only expeditionary air command-and-control system in the world. We have developed it independently and successfully; we have deployed it jointly with the Navy; we have deployed it jointly with the Air Force; we have deployed it with NATO. We are the only service in the world that has taken an expeditionary air command-and-control system to Europe, and fully integrated it with NATO as well as with U.S. air power. We have done what we say we can do.

ABOVE: Armored Marine checking out battlefield.

The question is not one of air space, but of who controls the air resources. Those resources are as important to us in our operations as the artillery or the tanks. We are on record as integrating and cooperating with the other services — with fighter attack, with long-range recon. We say we do it, and we have done it. The offensive air support, the close air support, the Marine air command-and-control are all part of our aggregate capability. They are essential to maintain the integrity of our command and the fighting capability of the Marines

SOF: If we had an incident in the Persian Gulf, and the Marines were deployed along with — maybe a little later — Navy, Air Force and Army elements, the Marine Air would stay under direct Marine control?

GRAY: Our air-ground logistics team would be there. And we would integrate our air power fully into anybody else's. In fact, we could also, in the expeditionary mode, take over theirs. We have the air command-control. We can integrate with the Army's air defense. We can do it all, and we can do it well. We will certainly provide air support for our friends when it's needed. We always have, and we always will.

ABOVE: CH-46s bank into turn.

RIGHT: CH-46 prepares to land.

SOF: General, are there any plans in the Marine Corps to replace the M60 tank?

GRAY: Yes. We will replace the M60 with the XM-1 tank that the Army is developing. We will wait until it has the new 120mm gun with the better ammunition. How many we get depends on how many we can afford. This year we're beginning to see a little increase in our funding, but for the last four or five years, in my view, the Marines have not had adequate funding, nor has that part of the Navy that is of intense interest to us — amphibious ships and certain areas of aviation. We hope that things are beginning to turn around.

SOF: What's coming down the road for Marine aviation, particularly to replace helicopters like the CH-46?

GRAY: The CH-46, an old workhorse, will approach the end of useful life around the middle of this decade, being phased out by perhaps 1987 or 1988. We think the services need a new medium lift helicopter. We have forwarded a recommendation for what we call an HMX, the new, medium-lift helicopter.

This helicopter could take any one of two or three variations. It might incorporate new technology — a tilt-wing advanced blade for example — or it might be a type currently in existence or perhaps a derivative of the Blackhawk. We do need a replacement for the CH-46 family, and research-and-development money will be spent this year and next for the design-and-paper-work. We've clearly got to do something about the CH-46; it's an old bird.

The Marines have the only expeditionary command-and-control system in the world.

ABOVE: Troops maintain CH-46.

TECH SUMMARY COUGAR/GRIZZY

The Cougar and Grizzly are currently in use throughout the Canadian armed forces, which deploys them at the battalion level in approximately even numbers. They are used in Canada as reconnaissance vehicles, sometimes along with heavier armor. The Cougar sports an Allis-Chalmers turret with a 76mm gun, a .50-cal. and a 7.62mm machine gun, and smoke-grenade launchers able to throw a smoke-screen in a 360-degree perimeter. The Grizzly has a Cadillac Gage turret with machine gun only.

Engine: 6-cylinder turbocharged diesel (Detroit model 6V53T) delivering 275 horsepower.

Transmission: GM automatic.

Suspension: Six-wheel independent.

Power Train: Four-wheel-drive (normal) convertible to six wheels with the flip of a lever.

Fuel Tank: 210 liter (57.8 gallons).

Range-highway: 450 miles.

Armor: Will stop small arms, some shrapnel. Reacts to anti-tank weapons and/or tank cannon, with Swiss cheese phenomenon.

SHOOTING LAVs

The corporal and his squad had been working with the Canadian LAVs (Light Armored Vehicles) for 10 months. Squad tactics. Platoon tactics. Roll down the slope of one dry lake, bounce into hull defilade, shoot, back up, scoot. Assault this objective today, that one tomorrow. All fun and games, the daily life of a peacetime Marine at the world's largest Marine base. Drag ass back to the barracks after chow and get cleaned up for another go at it "manana."

Then the big exercise: For four days, 5,500 Marines (with half a hundred of the world's press flown in from all over the country) live-fire, drive and dismount, hump another hill. Lt. Gen. P.X. Kelley is there, too, looking spiffy in clean Marine jeans. And then it's all over — the LAV concept is something the Corps wants. So clean up the borrowed Grizzlies and Cougars, make them shine, put 'em on a flatbed for the trip back to Canada, and thanks, buddies, and "Semper Fi," and let's have some Liberty, whaddaya say?

Then I showed up, four cameras, a pile of film. SOFers want to know about this stuff. What does the beast ride like? Can you get out in a hurry? How 'bout some photos for the nice readers? A few phone calls, a little dignified pleading — "Well, shit, how can I take photos of those things when they're on a truck? How about a little spin off into the booneys, maybe a squad of infantry? Can we see what these babies will do?"

So the corporal and his squad were there with me, hunkered down on a little ridge near the edge of the base. I explain to the two sergeants who command the LAVs what I'd like them to do. Now it's the corporal's turn.

"Corporal, when the vehicle stops, I'd like you to have your men come out on the double. Assault drill, come up this slope like you were taking fire. The Gunner — CWO 4 Ron Fraizier, the Base public affairs officer — will pop some smoke, and have your men fire and maneuver through it."

The corporal nods. Old stuff. Ten months of this, and now it's one more time.

"I think we'd better rehearse this once, without the smoke," I decide. The corporal nods again.

"One thing more," I say. "I'd like it if your men would look like they're angry. You know, mad at the world. A good Marine is an angry Marine, and all that."

"No problem, sir," says the corporal, straightfaced. "They're already pretty pissed off at you." —M.W.

MOBILE MARINES

It's a little hard to picture at first: Marines in the desert, Marines ploughing across a surface that from the distance and safety of altitude looks flat and smooth but which is in reality covered with loose soil and rocks, Marines in small, lightly armored, wheeled fighting machines, leaving rooster trails, Marines bounding over low dunes, scuttling behind rocky outcrops to shoot and then scoot. I always throught the Marines had to be able to smell salt water. But here I am in the turret of a Canadian Cougar, bouncing along at 30 mph, not quite as comfortable as on a highway but certainly not as bad as in a jeep or even a dune buggy.

Continued on page 72

ABOVE: Marine on LVT P7 behind .50-caliber machine gun.

LEFT: Marines with M16A1s maneuver around Grizzly.

Fowler Wins 1981 BIANCHI CUP

by Matt Fredericks

DESPITE my disinclination to use superlatives, I realized that I had to use them to describe the Bianchi Cup. Held 20-23 May, this event combined a top-rate facility with superb weather and an outstanding range crew to provide the best-run match I've ever attended. Held at Ray Chapman's Academy in Columbia, Mo., it provided a variety of challenges for the world's top shooters. The large contingent of foreign contenders who were present showed that good marksmanship is not exclusively an American talent.

The overall winner was determined by the competitor's position in four different matches, each of which challenged different types of shooting skills, since the Bianchi Cup was designed as a match in which PPC, Bull's-eye and IPSC shooters could compete on even terms. Each stage was limited to six-round strings, and rapid reloading did not apply. Over the years, both PPC and IPSC shooters have done well, while top Bull's-eye competitors have been conspicuously absent from the top 10 finishers.

Match One, "The Practical Event," was the only one of the four that included a 50-yard stage. Stage one of this match, conducted at the 10-yard line, required the shooter to fire 16 rounds from this distance. Stage two was fired at 15 yards, and involved an expenditure of 12 rounds. Stage three, fired from 25 yards, also involved 12 rounds. Stage four, fired from 50 yards, separated the men from the boys. Regardless of the type of weapon chosen, competitors dropped the most points in this last stage. Winner was Mark Duncan of North Carolina. Duncan, owner of Duncan's Gun Shop (P.O. Box 1959, North Wilksboro, NC 28659), used a bull-

ABOVE: Kelley Stewart shows form that brought her fourth-place honors in women's division. Weapon is accurized Government Model .45. Photo: Tom Stewart
UPPER LEFT: Bob Poos, SOF Executive Editor, presents SOF's First Prize Award to Mickey Fowler at Bianchi awards ceremony. Photo: Matt Fredericks
LEFT: Mickey Fowler uses Devel custom-modified .45 auto to take first place in Bianchi Cup. Photo: Matt Fredericks

barrel S&W built by himself. His score was 474-29X, only six points short of a perfect score.

Match Two, "The Barricade Event," was considered by many to be a sure thing for the PPC entrants — but surprisingly enough, it wasn't so. Although competitors had to fire from both sides of the barricade, time limitations were too short to allow the shooter to change hands, resulting in some curious stances designed to be effective under these circumstances. The match had four stages: 10, 15, 25 and 35 yards. Although many competitors' performances were impressive, they paled in comparison to Mickey Fowler's efforts. Fowler set a new record for this match, shooting a perfect score of 480-40X. He shot with a customized .45 automatic built by Devel, the Cleveland, Ohio, firm known for its customized S&W 9mms (see "Pistols with Polish," SOF, November '80).

Match Three, "The Moving Target," one of the more difficult stages of the Bianchi Cup, caused more than one excellent shooter to fall apart. I saw some well-known shooters throwing shots far afield of their usual match efforts, since the farther away the shooter moved from the target, the greater the lead necessary to hit it correctly. Stages were fired at distances of 10, 15, 20 and 25 yards. Mickey Fowler also won this match with a score of 470-23X, another new record for him, and an impressive, nearly flawless performance.

Match Four, "The Falling Plates," produced the greatest excitement. It consisted of six eight-inch metal plates that had to be tipped over by bullet impact. Three shooters, Nick Pruitt, Mark Duncan and Mike Dalton, shot a perfect score

on the plates, so a three-way shoot-off was held to determine the winner. In a fantastic display of speed and accuracy, Pruitt won. When shooting the 25-yard stage of the match, Pruitt stayed on the far left side of the line, increasing his distance to the second set of plates to 35 yards. He elected to do this because he believed the ground on the left side of the range was better suited to accurate prone shooting. Despite this self-chosen "handicap," Pruitt dropped all 48 plates.

The top 10 shooters in the match were:

1. Mickey Fowler 1890-88X
2. Mark Duncan 1882-83X
3. Mike Dalton 1869-83X
4. Nick Pruitt 1868-64X
5. Royce Weddle 1863-78X
6. Mike Murray 1858-82X
7. Tom Campbell 1854-73X
8. Paul Liebenberg (South Africa) 1851-71X
9. Craig Gifford 1843-76X
10. John Pride 1835-66X

Top woman competitor was Edith Almeida of the Republic of South Africa, with a score of 1652-45X. Second place was taken by Walli Louw, also of South Africa, with a score of 1483-48X.

The Police Marksman Association (305 South Lawrence, Montgomery, AL 36104) offered a special team award for any four shooters who registered as a team prior to the beginning of the match. This competition turned out to be strictly regional, with both winning teams coming from California:

FIRST TEAM	SECOND TEAM
Mickey Fowler	Nick Pruitt
Mike Dalton	Ray Neal
Craig Gifford	Jerry Usher
Mike Fichman	Ralph Pendelton

A number of social events were held in conjunction with the match to give competitors a chance to relax and visit. Colt Firearms and the manufacturers of Breakfree lubricant sponsored an international cocktail party, and Heckler & Koch sponsored a barbeque. Colt also sponsored the Colt Challenge Cup. Breakfree and H&K provided merchandise for the event, and H&K also sponsored the moving-target event.

Other organizations which sponsored events included Sturm, Ruger & Co., the falling plate event; *Guns & Ammo* Magazine, the barricade event; *Shooting Times* Magazine, the international event; Police Marksman Assoc., the team event; *Gun World* Magazine, the practical event; *American Handgunner* Magazine, the median award; *Combat Handguns* Magazine, the ladies' event; and *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine, the First Place Award. The sponsors' list indicates that John Bianchi and his staff know how to present a professionally run match that attracts positive media response.

SHE'S A SHOOTER

Kelley Stewart is 16, petite (5'4½", 120 lbs.), has short dark-blonde hair and blue eyes and can shoot a Government Model Colt .45 pistol so well that it is awesome. And she has been shooting for only two years.

Until July 1980, this native of South St. Louis had done nothing more with a firearm other than plink with a .22 when accompanied by her father, Tom, who knew very little about guns himself. Then the elder Stewart — who has since become the official photographer for Bianchi Cup and IPSC matches — decided it was time for the whole family to learn self-defense.

So he signed up the Stewarts, mother Millie and brother Ian, then 10, plus himself and Kelley in Andy Langley's

ABOVE: Lew Sharp of Colt Firearms fires from behind barricade during Match 2. Weapon is Colt .45. Photo: Matt Fredericks

UPPER LEFT: Kelley Stewart knocks down plate in Match 4 of Bianchi Cup, using accurized Government Model .45. Ron Talley (right) shoots .45 Colt from prone position. Photo: Tom Stewart

LEFT: Mike Dalton uses Swenson customized Colt .45 to place third in Bianchi Cup. Photo: Matt Fredericks

Personal Safety, Inc. school in Columbia, Mo. (See SOF, July '81.)

Said Kelley, "I've always been very athletic and this seemed just to be something else to accomplish. But I must've had some natural ability because after the first time Andy saw me shoot, he said, 'I'll make a shooter out of you.' And that he did. Andy is a super coach."

It didn't take her long to catch on. She felt she had enough ability — and self-confidence — to enter the IPSC national match last October. She placed sixth among the women in it.

This year she was the fourth woman and the top American in the Bianchi Cup. The high woman shooter was Edith Almeida of South Africa who usually wins everything on Bear Creek including the bear when she shoots in competition.

But neither she — nor anyone else — intimidates this kid.

"I hope to be the top woman in the Bianchi shoot next year," Kelley said.

This year she applied a formula to her shooting: "I wanted to complete exactly 75 percent of the course, within the time limits. I did that and I'm satisfied. I think I could have shot a little better but I'm satisfied."

At the moment, Kelley is using pretty basic equipment: an accurized Government Model .45 that she bought from Ray Chapman, a Rogers holster and magazine carriers.

But a Buford, Mo., gunsmith, Kurt Hardcastle, is building her a special 9mm on a Government Model frame. "I think I'll be able to control it better because of the reduced recoil; I think I'll be able to get my shots off more quickly and, of course, I'll have more rounds to shoot in each magazine."

Kelley, who is a student at the St. Louis Academy of Mathematics and Science, says, "The best thing about it [shooting] is meeting all the different people. I also enjoy the competition and the fact that there is very little, if any, jealousy among the women shooters. They're all good friends of mine, now, even though we compete."

The highlight, for her, in the Bianchi match was the moving target course, where she hit 396 out of a possible 480. "That was the one in which I'd had the least practice."

She adds, "The most fun, though, is the falling steel plates. I didn't shoot as well as I should have in that course but I still had fun." She hit 33 out of 36.

Any advice for young people getting into the shooting sport?

"Yes. First get yourself a good coach. He'll show you what you're doing wrong and then you won't keep on making the same mistake over and over again. And then when you've got the basics down, practice, practice, practice."

Kelley ended up the Bianchi Cup shoot with a 1,473 and 39 Xs.

Don't bet she won't beat that — and perhaps all the other women — at next year's Bianchi.

—Bob Poos

MICKEY FOWLER SPEAKS OUT

Interviewing Mickey Fowler just after he's taken first place in a national pistol shooting match is becoming something of a habit for me. The first time was at the IPSC national in Park City, Utah (see "The Big One," SOF, November '79), and the most recent was the Bianchi Cup shoot in Columbia, Mo., in May. Somehow I missed being at the Bianchi in 1980, which Fowler also won.

How does it feel to be a consistent winner of big-league shooting matches? "Winning never gets old. But, on the other hand, it's one thing to be on your way up and winning, and quite another to try and stay there when you're in the limelight. Everybody wants to knock you off. It's a little like being 'Top Gun in the Old West'; some new kid is always going to challenge you. And it gets harder to put your ego on the line each time. But I love it."

Fowler fought an uphill battle to win this year's Bianchi. He missed one of the steel plates on that course of fire in the first day's shooting. As he puts it:

"I dug myself a deep hole and had to build a ladder and climb out."

And climb out he did, culminating by firing a possible 48 out of 48 on the barricade course the final day. That possible included 40 Xs which Ray Chapman, owner of the Chapman Academy at Columbia, where the match was held, said was "a record that will probably stand for a long, long time."

Continued on page 80

THE BOYS IN THE BUSH

SOF Joins Patrol In Ovamboland

Text & Photos by Al J. Venter

RIGHT: Ambush position along field fenced by dried thorn bushes. Rifle is SA R4 and machine gun is GPMG (MAG). ABOVE: Using GPMG (MAG) for cover, South African enters previously hostile village about three klicks from Angola.

PETE Dreyer could have been a combatant in any fighting-man's army. Wiry, like a terrier, he could march for days at a stretch and often through the night if the trail was "hot."

His appearance — torn fatigues, bush hat tucked in on the sides to allow for, as he put it, "better hearing," T-shirt with sleeves ripped off and looking as if it had been on his back for a month, buckle-down webbing and R4 automatic carbine — belied his origins. A seven-day growth of beard, sparse in parts, could not conceal Dreyer's youthful features. The South African turned 19 on his last 11-day patrol along the Angolan border.

A decade and a half earlier, he probably would have been indistinguishable from the thousands of young Americans and Australians serving in 'Nam. He enjoyed the same kind of home life as they before coming to the front. He had folks and a girl back home. Evenings, when he was bedded down in his narrow slit trench that had taken half an hour to dig in the dark, he would spend time reflecting upon what he would probably be doing at that moment were he not in the bush. Dreyer's thoughts were the stuff of a hundred wars before him and countless thousands of soldiers on patrol in wartime.

But, in Vietnam, the terrain and weather were different, for South West Africa is a dry, often dusty land, especi-

ABOVE: Breakfast stop. Troops usually move before first light, then stop an hour later for day's only hot meal. All these youngsters were still in their teens. Rifles are SA R4s.

ally in the north where the terrain gives way to almost desert conditions for some months of the year.

The common denominator is the enemy. Like the Viet Cong, SWAPO — or Swaps, as its members are referred to by Dreyer and his pals — receives most of its moral and material succor from the Soviets.

While I was with Dreyer in the bush, he fought his own war, usually with animated vigor. His mind was tuned to absolutes; there was no middle way. It was either for or against — and SWAPO was definitely *against* — especially in a conflict so close to home. As the crow flies, Ovamboland is about 650 miles from the red-brick municipal house in which Dreyer was born and bred in Mafeking (of Boer War siege fame).

It takes a couple of days to get into the routine of spending more than 12 hours a day walking through some of the most inhospitable country on any continent. It's not easy going. The sand in this region is soft and for much of the distance it's a punishing "uphill" struggle, like walking on the seashore. It's interesting that throughout Ovamboland there are no stones; if you run out of ammo you haven't even got rocks with which to defend yourself. The only comforting aspect is that the enemy is faced with similar problems.

Certainly, one of the lasting recollections from this remote bush country is of the sounds encountered en route. Noises — a symphony of the African night — to which most city people never become accustomed.

So it was, in early April this year, during that second two-hour watch, after the cries from the nearby *kraal* (village) had settled to a monotonous murmer, that the bushbaby suddenly screamed above our heads like a woman raped. In less time than it takes to sound a general alert, we were all on our elbows at the ready. It's astonishing that a tiny animal which would fit comfortably in cupped hands can create such mayhem. But it happens. Routinely.

Few of the men slept easily that night. An hour earlier, most of the 30-man patrol had been roused by the sharp call of a jackal barely 50 yards from where we lay in a calcite depression. It was an ominous, hollow cry; to the superstitious among us, it spelled disaster.

The outer sector had reported back briefly by radio. But the young lieutenant, barely a year older than Dreyer, wasn't satisfied until he'd checked out the direction of the call himself. The lieutenant — a namesake of mine, but called "Horse" by his men — returned 20 minutes later not entirely convinced that the sound could not have been human, though at the time he said nothing.

Then most of us fell into a fitful sleep,

LEFT: South African troopie with South African R4 rifle in 5.56 cal. (.223). ABOVE: Casualty in operation area. Surgeons remove AK bullet from soldier's leg. RIGHT: Practice is daily event in all border camps. Here, belt-fed GPMG (MAG) is put through paces.

punctuated occasionally by Africa's discordant uneasiness. No doubt there were others out there in the dark watching too.

Other sounds, like the sharp screech as one of the animals of the night made a kill, woke some of the men after midnight. It seemed that there was something remorseless about the cry, futile and helpless, like the war which raged sporadically in this vast, arid African basin fringing the cold Atlantic.

We would probably have been more alert had we known that we would encounter — at first light — the tracks of a 50-strong enemy insurgent force headed southward out of Angola, barely a mile from where we slept. They could as easily have chosen the narrow tracks on this side of the Odilla watershed. Then, at least, some of the men would have been able to justify this fruitless seven-day march for a spoor of blood.

The possibility of contact is real enough on all these patrols but, in reality, a fire fight rarely materializes in its conventional, accepted form. More likely, we — like the enemy we sought — would spot a couple of dim figures moving among the sparse mopani and sound a challenge. Shots would follow. Then a search. Nothing. Another 12-hour chase, often at the double, with Airborne leapfrogging ahead in an attempt to set up a stop group. Then maybe a kill. Maybe ...

The enemy is hungry. In Ovamboland this year they're killing 50,000 head of cattle because the rains have been so sparse. Locals have little enough to keep themselves alive, not to mention feeding the units of an insurgent force.

Few of the men complain about the rigors of the bush, for the majority are still young enough to adapt quickly. In any event, these are the same kind of hardships which have been weathered by a full generation of Southern African fighting men before them — Rhodesia's included.

It is just one more African conflict. In the past, the continent left its mark on French, British, Portuguese, Spanish, Belgian, German, Italian and American troops, as it is now doing along the borders of an ebullient Angola.

The average South African operational patrol can last — according to demands or circumstances — anywhere from a few hours to several weeks. On average, though, periods between seven and 11 days are the norm, although long-range penetration groups do, on occasion, go out for months at a stretch.

In a land as arid as Ovambo, the men try to carry as much water as possible. It might not always be feasible to resupply, though it is possible by chopper in an emergency. During dry seasons, available water is usually covered by a green bacterial slime, but the majority of troops appear (with the help of tablets) to cope with it astonishingly well. One sortie with a mounted patrol in 1978 left me in the

hospital for a fortnight after I was obliged to drink bad water to stay alive. You need to understand real thirst under tropical conditions to appreciate *that* predicament.

On average, "troopies" pack six one-liter water bottles. A rat-pack a day containing a fairly adequate supply of provisions makes for more weight, though after the second or third time out, men are less likely to haul as many cans of food. Dog biscuits can make as good a meal as a steak when you're really hungry, though few modern soldiers are likely to believe it.

With weapons, ammunition, spare batteries, mortar bombs, mines, additional food, water and a dozen ammo clips each, the average South African troopie can count himself lucky if he sets out from base carrying less than 80 pounds. Packing this weight, he is expected to average 25 miles a day through the soft sand, which can be hell to anyone experiencing it for the first time. It could be *Beau Geste* all over again, though the terrain lacks the sparseness of the Sahara.

The radio "mech" invariably marches heavier; he rarely settles for less than 100 pounds, including his rifle. The heavyweight prize on any patrol usually goes to the machine-gunners. On our seven-day sortie, Number One Bren, loaded down with additional magazines and three belts of 7.62 ammo, each containing 200 rounds, topped 114 pounds, but the bearer appeared to manage comfortably, although his muscles stood out like brown cords. Better him than me.

No patrol works along any set pattern in the bush regions adjoining Angola. The object, each time, is to search for the enemy and, if possible, destroy him. And while some foreign observers — notably the Israelis — have been critical of this form of military methodology, routine patrols do serve the purpose of preventing ground saturation of much of Ovamboland by SWAPO cadres. Vacate any area for a period and SWAPO will exploit it before long. The Rhodesians learned that lesson in December 1972, when Operation Hurricane was initiated.

ABOVE: A "local pops" — as members of local population are referred to — talks to passing patrol carrying SA R4 rifles. RIGHT: SA patrol that made contact with truck carrying SWAPO terrs. Troopie fires SA R4 rifle.

Tracking in this war has become something of a science. Some of the more experienced scouts — many of them city-bred, white folk — can tell, from a short series of spoors, a man's pace, weight and, under duress, his height as well. It's also possible to "read" whether the subject was alert, his mood and whether he was carrying a heavy load (the heels dig in deeper).

An interesting comment made by one of the experts attached to South West Africa's Special Operations Unit was that very often city boys become better trackers than farmers' sons. Some are even better than locally born Africans, though even the enemy has to concede that the primitive little yellow-skinned Bushman has no peer in this field on the African continent (see "3/I Battalion/Bushmen," SOF, May '80).

Put a Bushman on the spoor of a SWAPO contingent and, all things being equal, contact is usually made if pace and light allow. That's one of the reasons why SWAPO will usually shoot on sight any Bushman civilian — male, female or child — it finds in the Operational Area. It's a tragic sidelight of a continuing war in which not a few Americans play a part.

U.S. ARMY RANGER SCHOOL

SOF Staffer On The Scene

Text & Photos by Fred Reed

FAR LEFT: Ranger student checks with another patrol. LEFT: Ranger instructor on the job. ABOVE: Perimeter defense in the woods while waiting to move on. Weapon is M16A1. Note M72 LAW. BELOW: Ranger students preparing for a raid.

GETTING into Army Ranger school is easy; getting out the other end is not.

To enter the Army's roughest patrolling school, all you need to do is volunteer, do 45 push-ups, six chin-ups, 45 sit-ups, run two miles in less than 16 minutes, pass the combat water survival test (which isn't *that* easy: it involves things like walking blindfolded from a 10-foot diving board with boots, rifle, and full web gear, removing the blindfold, and swimming out), and being certified proficient in 46 tasks such as first aid, calling in artillery fire, camouflage, processing enemy troops, operator-maintenance on radios, and so on. That's to get in.

To get out successfully, you have to be tougher than you ever thought you could be. Nobody should go to Ranger school without knowing what he is getting into. The Ranger pamphlet hints at this: "All applicants planning to attend this instruction should be briefed on the Ranger Course by a Ranger-qualified officer or NCO before making application." Students from any branch of service can attend, although since the SEALs started handling their own Ranger-style training, the Navy no longer sends people. The Reserves, National Guard and ROTC send students. No women are accepted. Men below E-5 have to get a waiver. Airborne training is not required: Non-airborne students go in by helicopter. Almost all are Army men. Fewer than two percent are Marines, and a few come from foreign military forces. The Air Force sends a few men, often from the special-ops outfits at Eglin AFB, Fla.

The purpose of the 58-day school is twofold. First, it teaches leadership of small units behind enemy lines under stress that approaches the hardship of combat. The students take turns planning and leading patrols week after week, without sleep, without food, without rest. It's brutal. A lot of men break.

RANGER

Those who make it won't break in combat.

Those who make it won't break when they go into combat. They'll know how to handle exhaustion and week after week of unrelenting stress. Second, Ranger school teaches patrolling — goes over and over the techniques, forces the student to improvise and improvise again, until he develops what one Ranger officer calls "a tactical mind." In combat, he won't have to stop and think.

"Patrolling is like rock climbing," an officer said. "If you don't do something ignorant or stupid, you can climb for years without getting hurt. The same is true of patrolling, even in territory held by an aggressive enemy — as long as you don't fuck up, you're probably going to be OK. Ranger school teaches you to do everything right automatically, without thinking about it."

Ranger training is intense, averaging 18 hours a day, with four hours' sleep. The first day begins at 0400 with a PT test, drawing gear, forming the class into a company of 150, and assigning buddies. Largely for safety reasons, a Ranger student is expected to be with his buddy at all times, and pays the price if he isn't. Then the company goes to Victory Pond for an obstacle course — it involves walking an eight-inch beam 35 feet above the water and will definitely separate the confident from those who aren't so sure — followed by an airborne refresher course and jump. This is necessary because many of the students with airborne training haven't jumped for years.

The next few days the students are up at 0400 (after lights out at 1100) for runs of up to five miles with boots, up and down hills, after a long PT session. Fall out of more than two runs, and you're out of the course. "Five miles doesn't sound like much," an instructor says. "Thing is, they're pretty fast miles — under eight minutes a mile — in boots, after a lot of PT. But doing it without sleep is what gets them. It's not the same as running after eight good hours. We get guys who say they run 20 miles, and I believe them. But they fall out here."

"I've watched a lot of them," an officer says. "It's the thin ones who make it. The big heavy jocks, the weightlifter types, they just don't seem to do very well." The best way to be is 150 pounds and dedicated.

Twenty-five percent of the men don't finish Ranger school at all, and of those who pass, another third are recycled — get hurt, for example, and have to pick up again where they left off. About 10 percent don't even show up. The first 10 days lead to most of the washouts. Not enough sleep. The school is authorized 14 classes a year with 150 students per class, but closer to 100 actually graduate, making roughly 1,500 Rangers trained each year.

In the first phase they also study hand-to-hand combat — "enough that they just might be able to use it in a confrontation" — advanced demolitions with bangalores, cratering charges and electric detonations; preventive medicine; and advanced airborne techniques: rigging gear, lowering lines, how to jump with radios, machine guns and so on, followed by a practice jump. As everywhere in the course, there is patrolling, always patrolling: terrain comparison, route selection, and long, rugged land-navigation courses. "They come back pretty beat up from land-navigation. The terrain is really rough, and they have to move fast. You have to want to get through it. It's probably the hardest land-nav in the Army."

Then they go to Buckner Range to learn to call in artillery support for patrols. This involves being in bunkers with 105 fire called in 50 meters away. "That tightens 'em," says an instructor.

"By the time we go to Camp Darby [part of Benning and named for Col. William O. Darby, an early Ranger leader], they are tired," he continues. "They stay that way the rest of the course. That's part of what the school is about: being so tired you can't think but still not making errors in judgment."

The students agree. A recent graduate says, "If you want to get through, you have to do it on guts alone. There are times when you haven't got anything left but guts."

Camp Darby is wooded, cut by roads, with open fields and swamps visible from a chopper snaking through the trees. The country drops

UPPER LEFT: Second lift hits the ground on helo insert. Weapons are M16A1s. LEFT: Crossing a road fast, two men at a time. Weapons are M16A1s. Note M72 LAW. RIGHT: Patrolling in the bush. Rifle is M16A1. Note LAW over shoulder.

in places to ravines and then climbs in long slopes that are hard on tired legs. Briars are thick in much of it, tearing at legs and arms; no matter how tired a man is, he has to keep from trying to force his way through them. It is here that students begin to use their own techniques that instructors have been walking them through until now. They learn to load choppers, set up an LZ, mark it by day or night. They learn how to rig door-bundles for resupply, how to work with intelligence and artillery. A lot of time goes into planning a successful patrol.

I joined them as they were preparing for a raid. The instructors gave them brief classes in open-air classrooms, but the emphasis was on learning by doing. Under the scattered trees, men cleaned and inspected their weapons, tied their packs down for an air drop, strapped gear to their bodies. Then it turned out that the wind was too high for parachuting. A chopper assault was substituted. Instructors moved around watchfully, making sure students did everything right. The quality of instruction is high.

Students are treated as soldiers, not recruits, and wear no rank. Officers are said to be unhappy with this at first, but they get used to it. "They have to. Getting through depends on being part of the team. It's bad enough without being isolated."

This patrol will be led by students, but it won't be graded.

The pattern at Darby is patrol after patrol, with responsibility being taken increasingly by the students. The first two are led by instructors. Then come two "semi-admin" patrols, which means that the instructor can call a halt (although the students are leading), form the students in a circle and tell them what they are doing wrong. Then comes the first graded patrol in which the students have to do it all. A student has to pass 50 percent of his graded patrols in Ranger school, including one in the mountains and one in Florida, and it is hard to catch up if you fail the first ones. Instruction is rigorous. While any Ranger-trained man can volunteer as an instructor, they tend to come from Special Forces, Airborne outfits, and the Ranger battalions — groups that are serious about what they do.

"Don't talk to the students," an instructor tells me, as we watch student patrol leaders making final inspection. "They have enough to worry about without being distracted by questions."

In a sense, Ranger school is the link between the ordinary soldier and the elite outfits. Most of the men were not super troopers — not the muscled, cocky, large-egoed military devotees you see in SF and SEALs, maybe not even career soldiers. Some looked puny and even a little doofus. This is deceptive: Nobody without more determination than any three average men possess ever made it through here. They will provide the high-grade leadership needed to keep the other troops going in time of war. Perhaps some will go to the elite 1/75 Rangers, at Hunter Army Air Field, or the 2/75 Rangers at Fort Lewis, Wash. — most would go back to their outfits.

Strength of the battalions is classified.

At 3:00 p.m., the company moved out to the LZ, carrying only the soldier's basic equipment: M16, M60, web gear, Cs, red-lensed flashlight. The students learn to be very good with ordinary equipment, not to use exotic James Bond stuff. We waited in the treeline for the choppers, Hueys, which came in with that odd fwop-fwop of rotors. Then we

RANGER

They learn to like the night because it protects them

barreled through the rotor wash to get aboard and strap ourselves in. Minutes later we were snaking through the treetops, looking down between the branches at swamps hidden by thick foliage. It brought back a lot of memories. Vietnam.

Safety rules say that troops cannot leave a helicopter until it is firmly on the ground, but when we touched down in a large field they charged out and formed a nice perimeter until the other slicks had left. Then it was into the bush and *move*. In Ranger school there is none of the fiddling around that you see in a lot of Army training. These guys hit the ground running — and kept a fast pace that is a killer on little sleep. They would be out all night on this one. For the next several hours we silently moved through dense woods with few halts.

"After a while," a Ranger officer said, "you start to get cunning. You learn to move at night, to like the night because it protects you. When the sun goes down your body wakes up. You do the right things by reflex. You've seen so many situations that you don't have to debate over things. I think it affects your later approach to problems. A man who has been through here will attack a problem right away, *do* something, instead of wonder about it for a long time."

The day wore on but the pace didn't slacken. No one talked. We came to a road and the instructors watched carefully to see whether the student patrol leader would do it right — put out left and right security, find the place where his men would not have to cross into a high bank, have the last men across obliterate tracks. The student did it right. He had better. Instructors in trucks were cruising the roads, throwing grenade-simulators and looking carefully for students. The last thing on earth the patrol leader wants to do is get caught and fail the patrol.

After 19 days at Benning, they go to the mountains.

MOUNTAINS: The next phase, which lasts 17 days, is mountain patrolling in Camp Frank Merrill, near Dahlonega, Ga. The camp rests along the Tennessee Valley Divide, part of the Shenandoah range, and the enemy always seems to be on the other side. Students are not led through patrols now, as they are assumed to know what they are doing. Patrols are longer, lasting several days, and cover more territory. Most of these are recon patrols, with raid patrols being more common in Florida.

Here the students will learn the peculiarities of mountain patrolling — how to recognize ground where they are likely to be spotted, where the enemy is most likely to be, where they are most likely to be able to move fast, and how to avoid terrain where they might be trapped.

Then comes mountaineering school. They begin by learning knots, and then practice rappelling from a 30-foot ramp to learn the technique. Basic rock climbing is taught to some degree so that Rangers can go up very rough rock, although they are by no means world-class climbers. Litter rappels — bringing a wounded man in a litter down a rock face — is taught, as are the arts of making one, two and three rope bridges.

By now the students are very tired, yet they still have to ambush vehicles, attack missile sites, cross rivers. There is the true story of the man who got so spacy from no sleep that he was almost off his gourd. Obsessed by the thought of a nice, cold Coca Cola®, he started hallucinating and tried to put a quarter into a tree, because he thought it was a Coke machine. He didn't even have a quarter. He only thought he did. An officer now on active duty tells of "seeing a little man dressed like an elf sitting on a tree stump. I nodded and he nodded back. I was so sure he was real I told the guy next to me. He just looked at me and said, '. . . yeah.' "

After students leave Benning, they are assumed to be in combat the whole time. Part of the psychological training consists of keeping them off balance. They never know where they are going to go the next day or what they will be doing. There is no fixed schedule: They may get four hours' sleep, or they may not get any. They never know. Instructors change the schedule from class to class to guarantee unpredictability. The men begin to separate from the boys.

"Getting through isn't guts," a recent graduate told me. "You just don't have any choice, so you do it."

"You could quit," I suggested.

LEFT: Cammying up for raid. Weapon is M16A1. BELOW: Ranger Instructor. RIGHT: Students stop to check map after helo insert.

"That's not a choice."

Before leaving the Smokies, they go to Yonah Mountain for advanced mountaineering. Part of this is a 250-foot rappel at night. For anyone who wonders whether he has confidence in himself and his rope, this is an excellent way to find out.

"We're pretty big on safety in this part," an officer says. "For example, we tell the men not, under any circumstances, to unclip from the rope until told to do so by a Ranger instructor at the bottom. There are ledges about a hundred feet down that cliff, and a man could land on them, think he was all the way down, and unhook."

Men outside of the school say this has happened, but without any deaths.

The last patrol of the mountain phase is 40 klicks, straight-line distance. There are no straight lines in the mountains.

FLORIDA: Then they go to Florida for 18 days. Toward the end of the mountain phase, the men return to Benning, are taken to a dirt road, given orders to Florida, issued chutes, and picked up on a dirt airfield by a C-130, for an engine-on loading. For once, because of Army regs, they get eight hours of sleep: Men who jump when tired tend to break themselves. They jump into Camp James E. Rudder at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., and they are tactical again, beginning the swamp phase of training. This is generally thought to be the roughest part of the course and, to make matters worse, men are starting to break down from exhaustion. The constant strain and lack of rest take their toll in Florida. Men begin to get careless and hurt themselves. For a man to go from 220 pounds to 170 is not uncommon in Ranger school, and, by the time he gets to Florida, he is starting to run on his last reserves. "Tired? It's not even like being tired. It's worse. You just don't feel good." Sometimes men just give up and quit a day or two before graduation.

"It's a heartbreaker, but either they can take it, or they can't. It's as simple as that," an instructor commented.

Because of the increased medical problems, preventive medicine is stressed. Men get trenchfoot, cellulitis, reduced resistance to infection, and foot problems from being wet all the time.

They also learn a lot about swamps.

"It's funny — a lot of the time you don't know you're in a stream until you're actually in it and the water is moving rapidly. It's so wet — you're in water up to your armpits a lot of the time."

The subject matter during the swamp phase is still patrolling, but now they have to do it in an environment consisting of tropical savanna, low trees and, especially near the Yellow River, miles and miles of territory covered in water four to five feet deep.

They take tracking instruction — not to track anybody themselves, but to know what an enemy tracker looks for and how to confuse him. They learn about high sign, low sign, how to cover their tracks, and then they divide into teams and follow each other for miles. There is a night evasion course, intended to teach them how to avoid enemy units and get back to their own lines.

"It's weird, man, out in that fucking swamp when you never know when you're going to find a snake. I promise it's not something you want to do twice."

They make two or three helo rappels from 60 to 70 feet, call in airstrikes and sometimes work with real planes — some of which the Ranger school won't talk about, but they're probably the Spectre gunships stationed at Eglin. The scenario here is that they are behind enemy lines, but that the enemy is being pushed back toward them, so they have to hit and retreat, hit and retreat, holing up in the day and moving constantly at night. Sometimes men are said to begin to think that it is real. During the last few days they get one meal — C-rats — a day.

An important part of swamp training is the use of rubber boats — RB-15s. The students learn the proper techniques of loading them and how to paddle them without getting all balled up. They also have to learn how to right a capsized boat, which is not an easy trick. This is one of the best small-boat courses in the U.S. military.

The last part of the course is a boat-borne assault on Santa Rosa Island, about 2,000 miles off the coast, after which they — what is left of them — have successfully completed one of the grimmest schools in the military. It is something that no one under any circumstances would ever want to do again.

"No way," an instructor said. "No way on earth."

SUSPENDED AGONY

Text & Photos by John Metzger

SOF staffer John Metzger radiates confidence during simulation of parachute cut away. Photo: Madro Bandaries

SOF Staffer Joins PMRS Spring Training

"THANK you, God, we're still alive and we're all hungry," said Maj. Sean Dill, summing up a hard day's training, topped off by my first parachute jump.

The banquet room at the Natchitoches Holiday Inn was filled with about 40 people — with members of the 1st Airborne and PMRS (Parachute Medical Rescue Service) at the head table. A group of satisfied people sat down to eat, discussing the completed mission. It was a welcome moment of relaxation — my first jump and training now behind me.

Reveille woke the jump school students at 0530 Saturday, 25 April 1981. First Sgt. Rick Tarver and his small staff at the Natchitoches, La., National Guard Armory provided some real Southern hospitality the three days we were there, and served up eggs and sausage for breakfast.

We were broken down into three sticks: Black, Blue and Gold — the first stick composed of PMRS and *Soldier of Fortune* staffers. We reviewed briefly the classroom exercises conducted the day before by the 1st Airborne staff, Col. Madro Bandaries presiding.

The PMRS jumpers received thorough ground training, as the 1st Airborne feels its duty is to get the PMRS to jump *right*. And that's just how it went — everyone had a sense of purpose, and everyone shared the goal of getting the job done safely and well.

After the classroom instruction, we were deployed outside in our sticks. Black stick got together for a few pictures, then it was on to "suspended agony" with Lt. Col. J.R. Lee. We were strapped into parachutes and hung from bleachers as Lee shouted out the jumping procedure in sequence:

"Go!"

"One thousand, 2,000, 3,000 ..."

"Streamer!"

"Huh?"

O.K., I'm dead. I quit counting, and forget to cut away from the main chute. My reserve is just sitting there, and I've got about 20 seconds before I hit the ground. Oh well.

I found out quickly why they call it suspended agony. I continued to screw up — and I wasn't getting down until I did it right. When Lee felt that each person knew at least half of what he was supposed to, we were told to cut away — releasing the capewells on the main chute and pulling our reserves.

The five common malfunctions were drilled into us — each with its procedure for correction. A "Barber's Pole" occurs when your lines twist up behind your head and, if you get to the count of 8,000, you cut away and pull the reserve.

A "Mae West" occurs when the lines are pulled across the top of the chute. People have been known to ride a Mae West in, but, as Lee put it, "It's not going to get any better." We were told to cut away from a Mae West.

The "Horseshoe" occurs when the chute has somehow gotten tangled around you (wrapped around your feet, for instance) and is failing to open. Pull the reserve immediately, without cutting away.

Then, of course, there is the dreaded "Streamer," in which the chute is just a sheet whistling in the wind above you. Cut away after three seconds and pull your reserve.

A "Jumper-in-Tow" is a rarity, but it has happened and we were told repeatedly what to do. If you happen to notice that you are behind the plane, stuck on your static line, put your hands on your head if you are still conscious. The jumpmaster will hold up his knife for you to see, and then cut you loose. Count to five and pull your reserve. No problem.

Col. Bandaries, commander of 1st Airborne, summed up the training: "We emphasize only the bad stuff, the problems — but that's all we can do." I fully expected to be dead within a few hours.

After the nine-man Black stick had satisfied Lt. Col. Lee with its ability to recognize and react to malfunctions, we marched into a small arena, where Maj. Dill began the PLF (Parachute Landing Fall) training. Dill is very conscientious in training PMRS jumpers. He won't tolerate a student who is not trying. He does the teaching, but the student owes it to him to at least *try* to do it right. The PLF

ABOVE: Capt. Rick Buckley demonstrates how to "daisy-chain" parachute for transport after landing. RIGHT: Parachute Landing Fall (PLF) training from pickup's tailgate. Truck moved at about 12 mph and caused many bumps and bruises.

is a very important part of parachute training, and Dill is going to make damn sure that you do it right.

We started by simply falling on the ground — elbows in, feet together. It was a natural movement for me, as it resembles the motion used in skiing, but it took numerous falls into the dirt before I felt reasonably proficient.

"The ground is going to rush up at you when you are about 300 feet above the ground. Don't look down. If you do, you'll get the shit scared out of you, and you'll stiffen up and break your leg. Once you are at about 300 feet, forget about steering — you're going to land wherever you are pointing, and there is not much that you can do about it. Pick a spot on the horizon, get into position and prepare to land," Dill said.

We then took turns standing on the tailgate of a pickup truck, and proceeded to PLF at about 12 miles per hour. I got a few bruises doing this, and I figured they were trying to simulate a landing as closely as possible. Jumping off a truck must be cake compared to jumping out of a plane. Yes, I was going to die, *and* break my legs.

After Maj. Dill reluctantly let us go, Lt. Col. Jack Jaubert double-timed us to the next training station, getting us psyched up with:

"Who are you?"

"Airborne!"

"Where are you going?"

"All the way!"

Swede Ware, sport parachutist and a newcomer to the 1st Airborne training cadre, gave us a talk on parachute control. By placing your feet together in a "V," you form a sight to tell you which way you are going. Once you know the wind direction, you can either run with it or hold your position by pulling on the steering toggles above your shoulders.

The T-10 parachutes that we used are modified with holes on one side of the canopy. Facing the holes into the wind, you travel very little (except down, of course). If you face the holes away from the wind, you will travel with it — running. If the wind is so strong that it is carrying you away from the DZ (Drop Zone), we were told to move back and forth in "S" turns — "crabbing" into the wind — not unlike tacking in a sailboat.

Our final training station was chute recovery, conducted by Capt. Rick Buckley. We were shown how to "daisy-chain" our lines and then repack the chute — for transport purposes only.

Finally, we broke for lunch. I figured it would be a wasted meal, as I, and many others, had butterflies at the prospect of jumping within the hour. But what the hell, it would probably be our last meal anyway.

After lunch, we went to the classroom and were once again drilled on malfunction procedures. Some potential problems at our particular DZ were landing in water, hitting power lines, landing in trees, hitting buildings and landing in fire-

ABOVE: Black stick takes break for pictures before jump. Jumpmaster Swede Ware stands at left. LEFT: Col. Madro Bandaries (right) and Lt. Col. J.R. Lee demonstrate parachute-recovery technique during classroom discussion.

ant colonies. Bandaries answered questions. The talk eventually turned into a bull session intended to communicate the importance of safety precautions.

Then the training was over. There was only one thing left to do, and that was march over to the Beech C-18, get into our chutes and accept Jesus Christ as our savior.

The first chute the instructors tried to fit me with was too small. It certainly didn't feel right, which didn't do much for my confidence. The second one fit, and I felt better. You would think a parachute would be light, but I was hunched under the weight and felt very restricted.

We lined up, and pilot Mike Phillips fired up the old C-18. Stay calm, I thought. We crowded into the plane and taxied down the runway. All I could see was the helmet of the man in front of me. That's when it finally hit me. I wasn't going to *land* in this plane — I was going to jump out of it.

Followed by the 1st Airborne's Cessna 182 chase plane — with local television crews on board — the old Beech lumbered into the sky.

We made a large loop to the south and came around the DZ from the north at about 3,000 feet. Swede Ware made sure we were in the right line of flight over the DZ, patted SOF staffer Ralph Edens on the back and gave the simple command: "Go!" Two more jumpers followed immediately and we circled for our second pass.

Well, they were gone, and there was more room in the plane. We weren't cracking jokes anymore. I noticed that the first three jumpers had stood too high as they exited — hitting their chutes hard on top of the door. But they did leave with their chutes, and when Ware pulled in the static lines and bags from the opened chutes, no one was found still attached. So far, so good.

The second pass was about the same, except we let out four this time. Just Swede and two jumpers were left — including me. That last pass seemed to take a very long time.

The eighth man in the stick was no longer in the plane, and I realized that it was my turn. I checked to see if my static line was connected to the D-ring on the floor and crouched in the door. Swede said go.

Suddenly, there was a strange, dead quiet — a sort of white sound. I was looking straight up into the sky, and I felt a slight tug. I guess I remembered to count, because at 3,000, I tried to look up — and couldn't. My helmet was blocked by the lines. Barber's Pole, I thought. I felt an

PMRS trooper deploys from Beech C-18.

unnerving calm. I kept bouncing my head back against the lines, contemplating whether to cut away, when all of a sudden, *sproing*! And there it was: a full canopy of T-10 parachute, the most forgiving piece of equipment ever invented, and one of the best pieces of gear the Army ever had, according to Bandaries. I tended to agree with him at that moment.

There I was, floating easily above the green Louisiana countryside at 3,000 feet. What a feeling! I untied my Steven's system — a cord running from the main chute to the reserve, in case the static line fails to open the main chute. I was shaking a bit — out of relief, not fear. After all, Bandaries did say that once the T-10 opens, it *will* carry you to the ground, and you won't be killed on impact. That was a comforting thing to know.

Using my feet as a sight, I could tell that I wasn't moving very much. In fact, it seemed as if I was just hanging there. It was going to take a long ladder to get me down from this perch. But then I started moving, and crabbed a little bit into the wind. I must have been doing it right, as I kept a fairly straight line of descent.

Other chutes were visible on the ground. The recovery truck was heading toward the trees. I guess a couple of guys didn't have such a straight shot down.

I watched the horizon. It was rising slowly. Eventually, the T-10 and I were about 300 feet from breaking my legs. I kept watching though. I was curious to see just what "ground rush" was going to be like — just for a second, that is. Then I planned to pick a point on the horizon and prepare for impact. Funny thing, though. I kept looking, and the ground kept coming up slowly. I felt like a big snowflake. Then I started to see bugs flying about in the alfalfa field, and I figured they must be *big* bugs and I had better be prepared to protect myself from them once on the ground.

I was hanging in a thermal — an upward surge of hot air. Bandaries told me later that this is very lucky on someone's first jump, and almost never happens. I touched ground like a feather, but executed a perfect PLF anyway, as I suspected I was imagining things.

It is hard to describe the feeling of completing your first jump — especially one that went so well. There was a lot of backslapping and handshaking when the recovery truck made it over to me. Everyone was fine, even though James Watson had landed in about three feet of water, and James Smith had landed in a 150-foot cypress tree.

Now everything — the 1st Airborne, the PMRS, the training — seemed more than just worthwhile. There was a purpose — a cause if you will — behind it all. We were a team, and I felt part of it.

PMRS: TRAINING AND GOALS

The Parachute Medical Rescue Service (PMRS) has always needed a training program. Commander of the 1st Airborne Division, Col. Madro Bandaries, and Secretary-Treasurer of the PMRS, Col. Alexander McColl, discussed this problem at the 1980 SOF Convention in Columbia, Mo.

The goal was to create a PMRS Rapid Deployment Team. The PMRS needs *quality* training — the 12th Special Forces won't do it; neither will the 82nd Airborne Division — so the Louisiana 1st Airborne Division became the only game in town.

After a lot of talk, the PMRS and the 1st Airborne decided to do it. About 30 people — most of whom are qualified in some field that would be valuable on a PMRS mission — met in Shreveport, La., on 24 April 1981.

As a result of this training program,

Continued on page 65

SOF Looks At THE FINN

Valm

by SOF Staff

SOF staffers attending the Association of U.S. Army (AUSA) convention in Washington, D.C., in January, saw for the first time a new Finnish light machine gun which is a complete weapons system. We examined all variants of the new Valmet M78 light machine gun — which at first look resembles an AKM.

One of the most striking features of the weapon is that it fires three separate cartridges from three models: First is the standard M78, which fires 7.62x39mm cartridges from 15- or 30-round magazines. Second is the M78 HV, which fires the standard U.S. 5.56mm cartridge, and is also offered with 15- and 30-round magazines. The third model has only recently been developed. It fires the 7.62x51 cartridge. Designated the M78 (NATO), it is currently supplied with a 20-round magazine, although magazines of 25- to 30-round capacity will be available eventually.

Weighing in at about 10.5 pounds unloaded, it is, we believe, the only light machine gun of this weight in the Western world firing full-powered rifle cartridges (i.e., 7.62x51 NATO). In fact, the M78 weighs only slightly more than many standard assault rifles firing the same ammunition, a factor that is one of this weapon's most prominent features. The gun and 200 rounds of ammunition equal the 23-pound requirement put forth by the U.S. Army for contenders in the competition for a new Army squad automatic weapon (SAW).

Each variant of the M78 is offered in either selective full automatic or semiautomatic. Each of the three models is sold on special order, firing semiautomatic only. Weapons firing only semiautomatic are mainly for sniper or counter-sniper use. All models may be adapted for use with the ART M-21 telescopic sight. A mount permanently fixed to the top receiver cover is available to allow these guns to accept it. This rifle and scope combination is currently being tested by several nations and, it is reported, possibly some branches of the U.S. armed forces. The ART M-21, which was originally developed during the latter stages of the war in Vietnam, is the current U.S. Army telescope sight. Another special scope mount has been developed by the M78's largest U.S. distributor, Odin International Ltd., which will accept the Image Intensification (Passive) Night Sight, Model AN/PVS-4, standard U.S. Army nightsight made by Applied Devices Corp.

After inquiring about reliability and accuracy, SOF staffers were allowed to test in depth all three M78 variants. Performance proved to be virtually everything the manufacturer claimed. Of special interest is the M78 NATO model, which fires the 7.62x51 .308 cartridge: It has never before been possible to fire full automatic with a lightweight selective-fire weapon with any hope of controlling it during burst-firing — not so with the Valmet; a new gas-release system at the muzzle makes this gun controllable.

Experience has shown that controllable full-automatic fire with the NATO cartridge when fired from a nine- to 11- pound selective-fire assault rifle (i.e., the Belgian FAL or the U.S. M14) is difficult. Many countries which adopted these rifles, including Canada, the United Kingdom and several other NATO-member nations, restricted the weapon's fire-control mechanism to deliver only semiautomatic fire. The problem of creating controllable full-automatic bursts, when firing the NATO cartridge, appears to have been solved with the Valmet NATO model through adaptation of simple, but efficient, muzzle vent ports. The weapons tested in full automatic handled better than others SOF staffers have shot. The M78 is light enough to be fired as a rifle (weighing only 1.5 pounds more than the M1). Yet, with the new muzzle-control device, it is sufficiently heavy to function satisfactorily as a squad automatic.

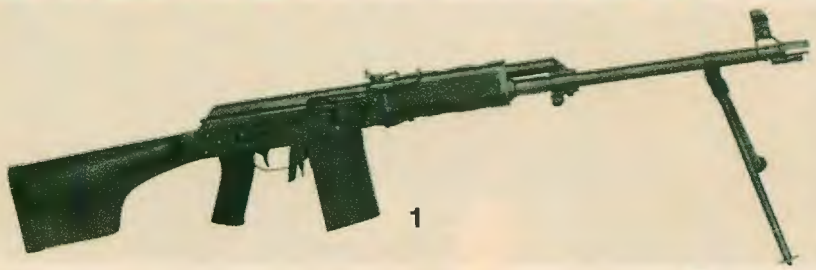
The M78-series basic design is an adaptation — and improvement — of already proven gas-operated mechanisms. Several new assault rifles and squad automatics recently introduced in the Western world (for example, Israel, South Africa and other countries) have used this same basic system and it has proved to be reliable.

Originally, part of the criteria for the U.S. squad automatic weapon was that it must fire the 5.56mm cartridge, as does the M16 rifle. However, talk at the AUSA convention suggested that a large faction within the military (especially the Marines) favors a

ABOVE: Trooper in bush with VALMET 7.62x51 NATO squad automatic weapon. 1: VALMET LMG M78 (NATO) 7.62mm x 51 with 20-round magazine. This weapon weighs only 10.5 lbs. and is controlled in full-auto fire. 2: VALMET LMG M78 HV 5.56mm (.223) with 30-round magazine. Model shown is as offered on international market. 3: VALMET LMG M78 7.62mm x 39 with standard 30-round magazine. This squad automatic weapon is used by 16 nations.

IISH LINE

et M78 LMG



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weapon/cartridge combination with greater range, and ability to fire armor-piercing rounds.

The M78 (NATO) fits this role. The ammunition it fires is the same as that used in standard U.S. tank and armored-vehicle machine guns. Since it is planned that most infantry will be carried to battle in such vehicles, the need for ready availability of ammunition is evident.

Since the early 1960s, the caliber 7.62x51 M60 machine gun has been the standard U.S. squad automatic weapon. But it is heavy (approximately 25 pounds).

The M60 was never intended to be a squad automatic weapon, but rather a platoon or company-support machine gun, and it is this role to which it will be assigned in the future. Because the new squad automatic weapon is not intended to replace the M60, the 7.62x51 cartridge will be available in line units for many years to come. (The Soviets have concluded that a full-powered rifle round is necessary, and have developed the PK machine gun for this purpose.)

The M78 is a lightweight, squad automatic weapon which can effectively counter, at extended ranges, the Soviet PK and PKM machine guns using the 7.62mm rimmed round.

The possibility of employing this weapon as a sniper rifle is a plus to squad firepower. The M78 in NATO caliber is among the most versatile rifles in the world, since it serves either as a basic semiautomatic or rifle — or a squad full automatic. Furthermore, it can deliver accurate sniper fire when used in conjunction with a telescopic sight.

The M78 should prove to be an ammunition saver, as rounds fired in full automatic are not wasted. One can put more rounds on target with this gun because of its controllability. Thus, less rounds need be expended per target of opportunity.

What future this weapon will have in the U.S. system remains to be determined, but it should be of interest for use by special units such as the Navy SEALs, Marine Recon and Special Forces — and because of its light weight, perhaps airborne or airmobile units. Qualified buyers for either the selective-fire M78 LMG series or the semi-automatic M78 rifles should contact: Odin International Limited, Dept. SOF, 818 Slaters Lane, Alexandria, VA 22314. Phone: (703) 549-2508 or 549-2506.

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VISA & MASTER CARD ACCEPTED

Continued from page 61

the PMRS is now in the early stages of becoming a tactically oriented, *professional* organization. One of the problems of the PMRS has been getting qualified people to go on disaster-relief missions, "not a bunch of yahoos and amateurs," as McColl put it. The PMRS and 1st Airborne are interested in becoming elite units, working together.

"We need people who can hump a rucksack and have technical capabilities," said McColl. If this goal is achieved, the next step is to establish better representation in Washington. The whole point is to create a Rapid Deployment Team that will not get hung up in bureaucratic red tape in the event of a disaster.

McColl emphasized, "We need an enthusiastic supporter in Washington, who knows what we can do. The key is a lock-on in Washington. Once we establish this, we are ready to go.

"We have the means, within 48 hours after the go-ahead, to have a team on the launch site, ready to go. Once we're ready, it's like a freight train coming out of a tunnel.

"We want to project an image of being very professional. Otherwise, the Peace Corps might as well go to the disaster area. Politicians feel more comfortable dealing with big, bureaucratic groups. Our image is very important in all aspects of our work — not only to our government, but to the government of the disaster area, as well as the people in the disaster area itself.

"We go in *clean* — no automatic weapons and cammie suits and berets. We need to look like what we are: civilians who turned up to help. The natives will either laugh or shoot at armed, camouflaged people. You can't afford to make sudden moves."

McColl noted that Americans — in Latin American countries especially — are immediately suspect as drug runners. "We don't want it to look like we are taking advantage of the situation. We need to make people in the disaster area trust us. They will always look at us as people with questionable motives. Latin Americans have had their fill of greedy *gringos*."

The 1st Airborne is prepared to assist the PMRS with equipment, aircraft and the creation of a pathfinder group. "The 1st Airborne will be first on the ground to assess the situation, then to put the PMRS out the door," said Bandaries. "We'll get the PMRS on the ground quickly, safely, and with the proper equipment."

The basic idea is to get as many medically qualified people on the ground with as much equipment as possible. It is not always necessary to parachute,

and will not be done — unless necessary. The 1st Airborne will maintain order and delegate authority in the creation of a rapid-deployment team.

"We want to develop a list of names — a cadre we can call on," said Bandaries. "We should have at least two training operations a year like this. The instruction will vary from what we are doing this weekend [basic jump qualification] to jumping into areas of difficult terrain."

The 1st Airborne believes in saving men through contingency planning — if something breaks down, the 1st Airborne is prepared to fall back and regroup — not retreat, just advance in another direction. "You have to take every bit of risk out of it you can, because there's enough there already that you can't take out," said Bandaries. "We want to live to be old paratroopers — we get a kick out of it."

The 1st Airborne is organized, and by working together, the PMRS will also achieve a high standard of readiness and efficiency.

After a few days of responsible training and discussion, I was impressed by the dedication and enthusiasm of both groups. The PMRS, with more training and organization, will become an elite unit — ready to go anywhere in the world at a moment's notice, and save lives.

Lt. Col. Charles "Doc" Ellis, an orthopedic surgeon from Elko, Nev., and the 1st Airborne's chief medical officer, expressed the views that he hopes to implement on PMRS missions:

"In most primitive areas (Afghanistan is a good example), 95 percent of people with serious fractures of arm or leg are treated by amputation. This is because of a lack of ability to transfer, and the unavailability of orthopedic surgeons. The local physician has to amputate, rendering the victim a cripple — forever unemployable, and a burden on society. I would like to teach local physicians how to deal with the problem of the injury, rather than resorting to the expedient of removing the limb."

Ellis feels that the major goal of PMRS is to provide a limited amount of care in a disaster, and to concentrate on spreading a philosophy that shows the natives in a disaster area how to take a little extra effort in caring for victims, who can then continue to be contributing citizens in their society.

"A broken arm takes three to four months to heal if it is not treated surgically. Since these people [in disaster areas] haven't the skills, they amputate just to get rid of that patient within a few days. We will either use a cast or treat it surgically because we will have the means," said Ellis. He would like to teach the people the means and techniques without resort-

ing to ablative (amputative) methods. In most primitive cultures, the society rejects an amputee after he leaves the hospital. We are fortunate in America to have the means whereby the amputee can become a valuable, contributing member of society.

Ellis is optimistic, but he knows there is a lot of work to be done: "We now have the logistical support of the 1st Airborne. However, we haven't the supplies or a readiness unit to get into an area within 24 hours. We need to begin stockpiling medical supplies — either solicited or scrounged by individual members — and we need a minimum of at least bi-yearly parachute training.

"We are going to look at costs of portable, inflatable operating tents. The U.S. Army has had them since Vietnam. But before we get them, we need more people with surgical training, plus another general surgeon for abdominal, face, neck and vascular repairs.

"We also need more standard practitioners like PMRS Medical Director Dr. John Peters. Also, psychological problems must be dealt with in a disaster situation."

One of the tasks that Ellis has assumed for himself is to advertise through *Parachutist* magazine and medical professional journals to recruit people in surgery, while Dr. Peters will recruit people in general medicine.

The PMRS has a long way to go, but with the people who attended the jump school, and the support of the 1st Airborne Division, it has nowhere to go but up. With some work and some more people, the PMRS is going to get down to the business of saving lives — safely — and that's what it's all about.

—John Metzger

Continued from page 23

case does not always matter in court. A punch is not something to be relied upon, as it is no match for *any* weapon; it is something to be resorted to when you do not have a weapon.

Keep It Straight

You can best practice the straight punch with a heavy bag or catcher's mitt. Avoid hooking motions, and do not turn your fist horizontally but, rather, leave it vertical, in what is called the "standing" position. Remember to focus on a point about six inches behind your target to develop shock and follow through. The standing straight punch is noticeably faster than the overhand "corkscrew" punch of the traditional Oriental martial arts, and is less susceptible to jamming — that is, to lose the effect of the punch because the target moves closer or farther away from you. If you change the length of corkscrew or "reverse" punch, you lose the momentum of the snap.

A standing-fist punch is akin to flooring the gas pedal of a car; you get run over at five feet just as much as at 50 feet along its path. It was the standing-fist punch that the late movie-idol, Bruce Lee, shortened down into his remarkable one-inch punch. If you can develop as much power in 36 inches of arm travel, you have the makings of an excellent straight punch.

You will find that it often becomes necessary to take a step forward to bridge the distance between you and your target, which adds momentum to your punch and should be incorporated into your practice. Try to concentrate on having your fist land a fraction of a second before your foot, allowing the momentum of your shifting weight to transfer to the target through the fist. Timing is crucial, but not terribly difficult to develop. If it is worth having, it is worth striving for. Diligence!

Don't Get Fancy

There is no real need, in everyday life, to learn ornate, overly elaborate martial-arts systems of dubious value, when an hour of punching practice two or three times a week is enough to develop a walloping weapon that will be a welcome addition to any man's arsenal. Today's world is not the ancient Orient. Now, arguments are usually decided with bullets and buckshot, not hands and feet, and one's martial training must be in step with the times, emphasizing the greater needs, and not the lesser ones.

Depend, when you must, on your rifle, shotgun or handgun; resort, when you have no choice, to the punch, and remember that everyone you punch *should* be a *sucker*!

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MAIL TO: Jeana Nugent, The Meeting Planners and Miles Travel, 5656 East Orange Blossom, Phoenix, AZ 85018. (Special group airfares may also be available until 1 September through Miss Nugent. Call 602-231-0200.)

The SOF CONVENTION is being held in conjunction with the 2nd Annual SOF Invitational Combined Shooting Championship — a shotgun, pistol and assault-rifle combat shoot to pick the top all-around combat marksman in the United States. One hundred and fifty top shooters will compete, by invitation only, for over $20,000 in prize money, guns and gear.

The theme of the convention will be "A Salute to Vietnam Veterans." The Colonel "Bull" Simons Memorial Award will be dedicated to all Vietnam veterans and will be accepted for them by a Medal of Honor winner. The keynote speaker for the banquet will be selected at a later date. Once again, cammies or police or military uniforms will be preferred dress.

Preregistration, which closes Aug. 17, is $75. For those who register after 0900 Aug. 17, the fee wil be $100. Fee includes: (1) Banquet (2) Transportation to all events (3) Convention T-shirt (4) Admission to exhibition hall, Invitational Match, all demonstrations, outstanding action movies, Vietnam Art Exhibit, cocktail hour and all seminars.

Seminars will include: Special Operations Group in Vietnam, presented by vets who conducted cross-border operations in Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam; POW/MIA; Police Survival; Desert Survival/Escape & Evasion; Survival Medicine & Gunshot Wounds; Russian Small-Unit Tactics & Weapons; plus others on Southern Africa, Central America and Afghanistan.

A limited number of display tables for exhibitors and manufacturers will be available (first-come, first-served). Interested parties contact SOF Exhibit Coordinator (303) 449-3750 immediately for space reservations and further information.

Room assignments at the Headquarters Hotels will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Rooms will cost $30 per night, single or double occupancy, in the Radisson and $35 per night, single or double occupancy, in the Sheraton.

Hotel reservations will be handled by Jeana Nugent of The Meeting Planners and Miles Travel (see hotel-reservation form below). Miss Nugent will also handle pre- and post-convention travel for those who desire it.

Preceding the convention, SOF is also offering a limited number of spaces — on a first-come, first-served basis — in the following courses running from 0800 12 September to 1700 16 September: (1) Combat Pistolcraft (2) Assault Rifle (3) Combat Shotgun (4) Desert Survival/Escape & Evasion (5) Survival Medicine and Combat Wounds.

Costs for courses, and cost and prizes for the 5,000-Meter Combat Run & Shoot, will be determined later. All convention activities are tentative.

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MOBILE MARINES

Continued from page 41

The Marines were born more than 200 years ago as a fighting force, a special breed of iron men on wooden ships. They formed boarding parties, fought with pistol and short sabre and belaying pin, accomplished in one short, savage and usually bloody swoop what the ship's crew could not: annihilation of the enemy at close quarters. To keep from being shot by their own sharpshooters high in the overhead rigging, they sewed short hunks of rope into a rough cross atop their headgear.

The braided X is still part of the Marine tradition, of course, though now it's just a proudly different uniform component on top of the dress cover. And if Marines no longer swing or leap across the open sea from one deck to another, knives or pistols gripped in teeth to leave both hands free for a hard landing on a hostile deck, their basic mission hasn't changed much. What has changed is the world. New geopolitical realities, new technology for weapons.

Now the space between the friendly side of the sea and the hostile deck might be 10,000 miles. And that hostile deck might be a beach, a jungle, a plain — or a desert. Which is why the Marines have opted for a new kind of firepower, shock action and mobility.

Later in this decade the Marines will deploy a brand new family of wheeled fighting vehicles, state-of-the-art hardware now in development as the MPWS — the Mobile Protected Weapons System. Starting from a baseline series of requirements, industry and the Corps are developing a family of vehicles to supplement their traditional tanks and amtracks.

Ultimately there will be some sort of six-wheeled vehicle with, probably, a 25mm cannon on it. There will be one version for light-armored assault, one to carry troops, one for combat engineers, others for command control communications, for combat intelligence, a mortar carrier and perhaps others for support functions, such as a battlefield ambulance.

And there will be a light-armored-vehicle assault-gun model, with some yet-to-be-determined gun. Several different guns are under active consideration for this role, including the low-velocity 90mm Cockerel, the high-velocity 75mm and a 105mm cannon. According to Maj. Gen. Al Gray, the officer directing the MPWS program, "Development and procurement of the gun drives the whole program."

But whatever name is finally chosen, and whatever gun, the MPWS will by the late 1980s have a closely defined tactical role and will become part of the Marine arsenal, along with their more traditional tanks and amtracks. In the meantime, the Corps has already accepted the mission of spearheading the new Rapid Deployment Force. They must be ready to move and fight anyplace in the world.

High on the list of potential trouble spots is the Persian Gulf, a bomb whose fuse is already smoldering. The Corps cannot wait the years necessary to develop and acquire the MPWS. While that lengthy process is going on, they need something off the shelf, a quick fix, something that can be built with today's technology and put into the field immediately. For this reason, six Canadian-built light-armored vehicles (LAVs) were tested for 10 months ending in late January of this year.

The test was conducted at the giant air-ground combat center at 29 Palms in the California Mojave Desert. The LAVs were leased from the Canadian forces and GM of Canada, their manufacturer. GM sent along a technical representative, and the Canadian forces sent a maintenance NCO familiar with the innards of the machines.

Three of the LAVs were Cougars, three Grizzlies. The Cougar sports a tank turret with 76mm cannon, and a 7.62mm machine gun. It's identical to the turret on the Scorpion tank, which is why Canada, which has the Scorpion, employs the Cougar both as a fighting vehicle and as a rolling classroom to teach Scorpion gunners the fine art of gunnery in motion.

The Grizzly has a different turret, no cannon, and room enough inside for an infantry squad of nine and their gear. The Canadian forces use the Grizzly as a highly mobile personnel carrier.

But the 10-month test was not a test of hardware. That will come later this summer, when manufacturers, perhaps five or six in all, will put their individual prototypes through the Corps' paces in the 132-degree heat of the desert. Instead, the just-completed exercise tested concepts. Could the Marines find well-defined roles for LAVs to mesh with their traditional mix of armor and amphibious tracks? Could they build a tactical doctrine suited to their unique mission? How is it all going to work?

For example, the Marine infantry squad has 11 men, and is either delivered to the battlefield by a helicopter — which immediately departs — or an amtrack, which is larger and slower than the LAV. Should the crew of the LAV — a driver and a gunner — become part of the squad, or should the LAV be built to handle the crew plus the squad, and the crew remain apart from the fighting unit? Would it help to integrate the crew into the squad and then cross-train other squad members to fill in as gunners or drivers?

These are questions not yet answered. The test was designed to examine various solutions to these and to other kinds of problems. And from them came data which the Corps planners will use to determine which off-the-shelf LAV they'll buy (742 in all) probably later this year — to be ready for the near-term mission. The Corps will use this data to determine what roles the MPWS will be assigned.

Once the LAVs, of whatever manufacture, are aboard, the Corps will have additional opportunities to develop tactics and missions based on day-to-day training experience. And if the Persian Gulf fuse isn't put out, they may get a chance to find out what their new LAV will do in actual combat. The Marines I spoke to, those who rode around in the Canadian LAVs for the better part of a year, would like nothing better. —M.W.

PAYCHECK

Continued from page 31

"It was a job, wasn't it? I was lucky to get it. I knew one of the guys, old Watson, from the Congo. There wasn't much doing right about that time. There were guys all over the place sitting in bars in Johannesburg and Salisbury, and I guess I was in Paris and London, reading the classified ads.

"Oh, there was some action in the Middle East. They were using about 100 guys in Yemen to train royalist guerrillas. Pretty good money, too — around $1,000 a month — but they mostly wanted radio and demolition technicians, and I didn't qualify. Then I heard from the grapevine about Watson and got in touch with him."

Was $1,700 a month adequate pay for four wounds in six days?

"Hell, no. But when you're right in the thick of it you don't have time to think about money. It's like . . . listen, that time in Umuneke, right when we were going in. I guess the closest I ever came to it in peacetime was one winter when I tried some skiing. You stand up there on the top of the slope, looking down at that steep, slippery sonofabitch ice and snow and your gut knots up, and you think, 'My god, how am I ever going to get down that!' You're scared to death — but it's exciting as hell, too. As soon as I get this knee in shape, I'll be back for more."

Other men echo Bishop, saying that excitement and danger run a close second to status and money as the bait which lures them to battle.

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Says one ex-merc, now a toothpaste advertising executive in France, "The smell of cordite is like perfume to me. I miss the sweat of jungle battles, the rat-a-tat of automatic-weapons fire — and the prospect of knocking over a fat bank."

A tall South African, a masseur before he joined the ranks of the mercenaries, sums up his motivations more succinctly: "Plenty of lolly [money] and plenty of fun."

Of chubby-faced Bobby Joe Keesee's unlucky adventuring, his brother has mused: "He always loved fighting and flying, ever since he was a little kid."

Keesee's ex-boss at the filling station adds, "He sure liked money, too. Excitement and money."

Acquaintances of Austin Young — another American soldier of misfortune who was caught leading a force of "commandos" in an attack on an ammunition dump in Cuba and was socked with a 30-year prison sentence in the marble quarries on the Isle of Pines — believe that he was simply out of his element, a

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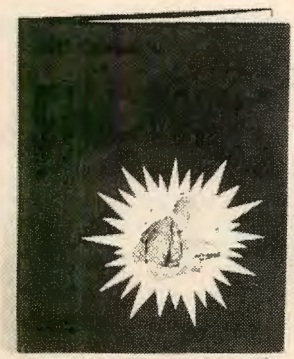

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sort of human dinosaur. "He was born a hundred years too late," they say. "He should have been an Indian fighter or a fast gun."

Super-Hero

Nevertheless, free-lance fighters appear to get great satisfaction from their work. Even if he was just a gas jockey back home, the average white merc sees himself as a kind of super-hero in the field.

As one battle-hardened Congo professional says, "I was somebody. All those people looked up to me. Even a Katangese major always tried to salute me."

For status-seeking hirelings, the Congo was the best of all possible worlds. "Mad Mike" Hoare's Fifth Commando unit, which stamped out the communist-instigated rebellion of the Simba warriors in the mid-1960s, may not have offered much money, but it offered plenty of ego satisfaction. A white mercenary who signed on to help soon found himself surrounded by his own personal retinue of blacks.

Packing top-notch weapons and serving under superior military leadership, the mercs arrogantly faced an untrained enemy which outnumbered them 20 to 1, but which often turned tail in terror and fled as jungle drums boomed the warning, "The white giants are coming." It got to the point where the mercenaries were often able to capture towns just by telephoning ahead to announce that they were on the way.

Way Of Life

Even the chief "white giant," Mad Mike himself, admits that he came to the Congo because he found any other kind of life too boring. Says Hoare, "I can't settle down. I tried to once. After I left the British army, I worked in London. It was hell. So I came out to Africa and tried being an accountant. It was worse. It was terribly dull. So I came to the Congo. I really don't know why. It's just my way of life, I suppose."

Another American mercenary, Peter Simon, went to the Congo not out of boredom, but to fill a flattened wallet. Simon, who is now temporarily "retired" and living in a resort village in western Mexico, was asked just how he happened to hook up with Mad Mike. Lounging on a tattered hammock on his Mexican patio and nursing a bottle of Carta Blanca beer, Simon laughed at the question.

"Simplest thing in the world," he said. "I answered a want ad in the *Johannesburg Star.* I kept it as kind of a good-luck piece. Do you want to see it?" He shifted in the hammock and pulled his wallet from his hip pocket, then unfolded a yellowed clipping. It read:

"**HELP WANTED** — Any fit young man looking for employment

with a difference at a salary well in excess of 100 pounds [$280] per month should telephone 838-5202/3 during business hours. Employment offered for six months. Immediate start."

"I was dead broke or I would never have followed it up," says Simon. "I'd been in Mozambique doing a little trading — hell, some people call it smuggling — with a guy I knew from Italy. I met him in Rome when I first went to Europe to kick around. He was always full of ideas for making money.

"Anyway, I let him talk me into this deal in Africa. But the sonofabitch cut out with our cash after the first three months and left me stranded. I finally got a ride on a cattle truck as far as Johannesburg. I was sitting in a bar, wondering where the hell to go next, when I spotted the ad in the paper."

Mixed Company

Simon called 838-5202/3 and was given an address and told to come right over. It turned out to be a dinky plumbing-supply company. The outer office was filled with tough, hearty young men in open-necked sport shirts, a few grizzled middle-agers and a choice selection of desperate-looking men whose whiskey breath and bloodshot eyes marked them as barroom habitues.

The room was small and stifling. The smell of sweat grew heavier as the waiting men milled uncomfortably, asking each other what was going on. Like Simon, no one seemed to know. Simon was tempted to leave until a good-looking brunette in a tight skirt came into the room and began to fill them in on the "employment with a difference" in a sweet soprano voice.

Simon quickly discovered he was in a recruitment office for white mercenaries. Congolese Premier Moise Tshombe needed help to fight Simba rebels who had set up an outlaw government and currently ruled almost half the Congo.

At the mention of fighting, seven men disappeared. The rest stuck around while the brunette outlined the deal: Those who signed on would be part of an all-white brigade. The money would be regular, the fighting easy and the beer plentiful. There wouldn't be much training, only three weeks, she said, because "we haven't all that much time to spare." Each man would probably clear about 150 pounds per month, she told them, plus the fact that "the closer you get to the danger area, the more money there will be for you."

It wasn't the best-paying proposition Simon had ever heard, but his finances were so low that he decided to go along anyway. Besides, it sounded interesting.

Congo Drill

Within a week, he found himself on a plain in the southern region of the

Congo — surrounded by tents, dust and nearly 1,000 raw recruits from all over Africa and much of Europe. At first there were no uniforms. The white troops drilled in their civvies, wearing shorts and sunglasses — grinning and bitching about the chow and the mosquitoes. And the boredom.

The only excitement came during the second week, when a reporter and a photographer for a European magazine showed up to do a story. The photographer made the mistake of pointing his camera at a group of recruits without asking their permission. Two Frenchmen, dregs from the gutters of Algiers, almost beat him to death before a burly South African sergeant pulled them off. Publicity is not universally welcomed by mercenaries.

Although Simon found the training overly basic and disorganized, by the time the third week rolled around the softies had been weeded out of the ranks. The men who remained had one quality in common: they were tough.

They needed that toughness when they faced the Simbas. At first, before they learned to fear Hoare's "white giants," the Simbas fought with frenzy, convinced that their witch doctors' *dawa* (magic) would prevent their being killed. Even if they were knocked down by the white man's enchanted bullets, they would supposedly rise in three days to fight again.

Hostage Rescue

The mercenaries faced the chore of rescuing white hostages from the clutches of these crazed warriors. In one rescue mission in the town of Wamba, where the Simbas held 250 hostages, the mercenaries fought their way in to find only 128 still alive. The others had been massacred while Simbas raced around the streets screeching, "Kill! Kill! Kill them all!"

Some hostages had been shot, some clubbed to death, while others had been tied up and thrown alive into the Wamba River. Or they died even more horribly — as in the case of the young, American, Protestant missionary, William McChesney. The Simbas did a mad war dance on McChesney's prone body until internal bleeding from ruptured organs ended his agony. Then they gouged out his eyes and chucked his corpse into the river.

In all, the mercenaries were responsible for the rescue of nearly 1,800 white hostages, but it didn't come easily. Simon soon learned that while some Simbas were overawed by the approaching mercenaries and quick to run, others still believed in the *dawa* taught by their witch doctors.

"You never knew what to expect," he says. "They might run like rabbits, or they might charge straight at you, yelling and screaming, with eyes like madmen. You had to hit the bastards right in the forehead to stop them."

There were compensations. "Particularly the women," Simon said with a knowing grin. "Those good-looking Belgian women were always damned grateful when we rescued them. I never had women as easily as I did in the Congo."

Bank On It

Nor did the mercenaries confine their interests only to "noble" rescue missions. More than one bank fell prey to white freebooters who had grown accustomed to living off the land. Looting became such a major preoccupation that Major Hoare eventually started putting armed guards on the banks the moment he captured a town. Otherwise, he allowed his men to take anything useful that they found lying around, realizing that few creature comforts were available in battle zones.

But even after Hoare adopted his bank-guard policy, some advancing troops managed to circumvent it by getting there first. Driving through three night ambushes on the road to Stanleyville, Simon once had occasion to tell a British journalist, "Don't damage the dynamite you're sitting on. We're going to need it when we come to a bank."

The Britisher, a green but enthusiastic young reporter, thought Simon was kidding. Simon claims he was but his mercenary cohorts weren't. When the truck rolled into a darkened, abandoned village, they efficiently burst into the combination general store and bank and blew out its ancient floor safe. The take was only the equivalent of $732, but the action of the rogue mercenaries so disillusioned the idealistic young reporter that he left the Congo two days later.

"He never wrote a word about it," Simon grinned. "Somebody must have put the fear of God into the guy. Naturally, I didn't have a thing to do with it."

Perhaps he didn't. From the looks of his run-down, rented Mexican home, he didn't manage to save money as a mercenary. Asked about his plans, Simon confirmed the impression that he was short of money, replying, "Yeah, I'm looking for action. Things are a little slow right now, but something always turns up. I'm getting a little restless. That's one of the nice things about this business. There's always a war popping up someplace."

That Extra Something

Simon isn't alone. Patience is not a virtue enjoyed by mercenaries. They aren't the kind of men who can settle down to a solid job, working 40-hour weeks and barbecuing steaks in the back yard. Mention a world trouble spot to them and they are off and running, ready to swear allegiance, temporary though it may be, to almost any government ready to lay cash on the line for a little sweat and a handy gun.

These are life's loners — misfits, dregs, rootless men looking for a strange "something extra" in life. Many find it briefly — a few weeks or months of the high excitement that comes with living close to violent death. Some find only a poorly constructed coffin and a hasty burial.

If they survive, they must continue searching. No matter where these warriors go, they're never at home. They can't settle down. They're never assimilated. Always seeking, they never seem to find more than brief relief from the itch that plagues them. But that doesn't stop them from looking.

Not as long as someone has a war to offer and a checkbook handy.

SUPPORT SOF ADVERTISERS

BIANCHI

Continued from page 45

Still, Fowler frets about missing that one plate. "With the quality of the shooters in this match and their constant improvement, you won't miss a plate next year and win."

Fowler grew philosophical when asked if he preferred IPSC style shooting to PPC (the Bianchi Cup is a mixture of them, leaning more to PPC). "Oh, I like them both because they offer different challenges. Each has its place because both offer mental and physical control, although with subtle differences. I guess IPSC is a little looser. The running and swinging from the rope tend to relax you.

"The way I look at it, this kind of match is kind of like driving in the Indy 500 — you know exactly the problem you have to overcome, and the challenge is to overcome it better than you ever have before — while IPSC is like driving in the Grand Prix. You encounter unforeseen obstacles and have to conquer them."

The comparison of race-car driving to shooting comes naturally to Fowler. Before becoming a serious shooter, Fowler's hobbies included driving in Formula-5,000 car races and racing motorcycles on flat dirt tracks.

Fowler still appears much as he did in 1979: 6-1, 170 pounds, mop of dark-blond hair and moustache. Still a superbly conditioned athlete, he runs (not jogs) and lifts weights. But he has changed in some respects.

"I drink an occasional glass of wine now and then — although never during a match. And I took up smoking cigarettes for a while, but quit that. It's too hard on you." (In 1979, he was a teetotaler and aghast at even the thought of smoking.)

"Oh yeah," he grinned. "That blond hair you wrote about last time is getting gray."

He has changed his equipment entirely. In 1979, he shot a Hoag-built .45 and used a Gordon Davis cross-draw rig. Now it's still a cross-draw but the leather comes from Bianchi and he shoots a specially modified Devel which he won last year. "I want to thank Devel for that splendid piece of gear they gave me to shoot. They finished making it only three weeks before this match and I don't even know what modifications are in it. I just pull back the slide and shoot it." (See Matt Fredericks' accompanying article for details of the Devel.)

Fowler still owns his manufacturing firm near Encinitas, Calif., but has turned over its operation to a manager while he devotes his full time to shooting and teaching. He is head of International Shootists, Inc., a handgun shooting school.

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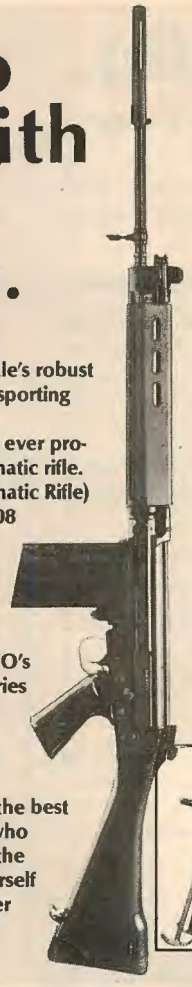

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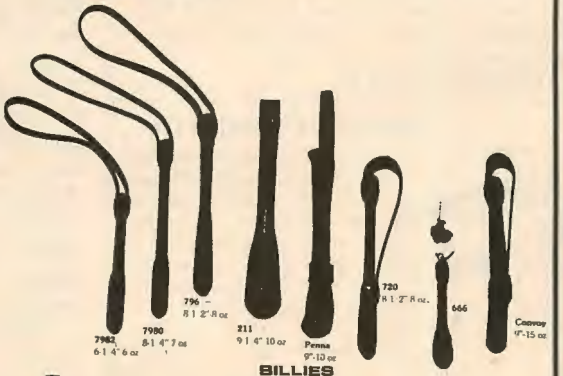

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DEALER INQUIRIES WELCOMED

He remains active in Southwest Pistol League shooting because "shooting in it gives you a natural advantage. You're always competing with top-level shooters. You can't relax a minute or someone's going to knock you off."

He added, "Look what our team [the staff of Shootists and all competitors in the SWPL] did here." Mike Dalton of the team shot third in the Bianchi and Craig Gifford, an SOF-sponsored shooter, placed eighth. Mike Fichman, another team member, came in 11th.

Fowler has determined that less practice-shooting is better for him than over-shooting. "I used to fire at least 300 rounds a day. I've cut that down to 150 max because I find that you can concentrate more and better on individual shots."

Fowler had kind words about many things concerning the Bianchi Cup challenge.

"I want to personally thank John Bianchi for putting on a fine match. And Ray Chapman runs a superb shoot — efficient and professional. And although I'm an automatic shooter, I like it that he's designed a course where revolvers can compete on an even level.

"Furthermore I want to personally thank Robert K. Brown and *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine for its long support of this kind of shooting. You're the first magazine that really got behind us."

Fowler is optimistic about the future of competitive pistol shooting. "I think we're in for an exciting time so far as competitive shooting development is concerned. I think if it's handled right, it'll become a popular — and respectable — sport, something like golf or tennis. Oh, it'll probably never attain the TV attention that they do and I doubt that winners' rewards will ever equal those. But it's getting better every year. If you're good enough, you can come very close to making a living at it now.

"Our problem with the public is a media problem. Too many people think of us, and all too often we're presented as, a bunch of guys practicing to kill people. But I think in time that may change."

Sweet as the Bianchi victory was, it could have been even better for Larry Michael Fowler, 34, of Chatsworth, Calif. He shot a total score of 1,890 with 88 Xs.

Had he fired 1,900 or above, he'd have qualified for John Bianchi's "1,900 Club" for which Bianchi personally makes a cash award of $5,000.

Missing that one plate cost Mickey Fowler 10 points. It also cost him $5,000. —Bob Poos

Continued from page 32

petition and uniformed-duty front breaks. As in all of the Rogers' front breaks, a key factor in its design is high-impact plastic.

We are beginning to see that plastic is to holsters what peanut butter is to jelly. After the past four years, you may have lost your taste for peanut butter, but if you like the front-break design, you should love the "Boss." The holster is suede-lined on the inside, plastic in the middle and top-grain cow hide on top. The sections appear to have been laminated together under high pressure, and then molded to the exact shape of the revolver. The "Boss" has all of the usual front-break features, plus a few of its own, including a hidden safety lock, making it reasonably kid proof. An associate of mine received a prototype "Boss" to test more than a year ago, and was told not to pamper it — he didn't, and it is still on the job, as good as new.

Although other Rogers' front breaks are offered for a variety of models, the "Boss" is presently available for S&W "K"-frames with four-inch barrels only. And while we're on the subject of "only," let me stress that while you may get away with mixing different model guns in other types of holsters, you must never try it with a front break, since by doing so, you may defeat the holster's security aspect, causing you to lose your gun while running or jumping. With the proper combination, however, an adversary will play hell trying to pull your gun out of a front break in a conventional manner. Remember that every call you go on is a "man with a gun" call: You are that man, so act accordingly.

It's A Duck

In a recent discussion about leather, one of my men told me that his gun was "always" falling out of his holster, and asked me if that meant that the holster was no good. I could only answer him in my Daddy's words: "Boy, if it quacks like a duck, it's a duck!"

If you haven't already done so, do yourself a favor and look at the various front-break duty holsters on the market. As John Bianchi indicates, the front break may not be the fastest design, but it's as fast as you'll ever need. If your department is one of those that places strict uniformity above safety, and authorizes only one archaic style of holster to be worn, show a couple of front breaks to your chief, and work to get the specs changed. Whatever make and model front-break holster you may choose, you will probably find it to be one of the best pieces of police equipment you have added in a long time.

BULLETIN BOARD

Continued from page 4

known as a local Robin Hood for his habit of giving captured goods to the poor. Kalakani was executed last year by "Afghan authorities," which is what AP calls the Russian puppet government. Kalakani's band numbered 3,000 men, who are still fighting energetically against the Soviet invaders. They say they will mark every anniversary of his death with a major attack.

According to the same report, 200 members of the Afghan/Soviet army defected to the resistance during heavy fighting at Julbasaraj in Parwan Province on June 12-13. Better you than me, Ivan.

POWs IN LAOS . . .

The American press has probably ensured that any American POWs still in Laos will never be rescued. U.S. intelligence believes that publicity over a group of Laotian mercenaries who, paid by the CIA, tried to find the POWs has led the Lao communists to move them.

There is considerable evidence that some of the 560 MIAs in Laos are still there. In May, sources within the administration said that an SR-71 spy plane photographed shadows in a jungle stockade that indicated the presence of Caucasians. On 9 February, a former Royal Lao Air Force pilot told the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* that 40 or 50 Americans shot down over Laos are still there.

"The U.S. intelligence community feels that these people were moved during April," the source said. "There were between a dozen and two dozen of them, and to find them now is going to be more difficult." He believed that, if not for press leaks, the mercenaries' search for the prisoners might have succeeded.

Further publicity over plans by various private groups to conduct a rescue raid has increased the likelihood that the prisoners have been moved.

SOF suggests that the responsible reporters be paradropped into Vientiane with "capitalist spy" stamped on their foreheads. They would then enjoy a lifetime of the same treatment they have guaranteed for others.

SUPPORT SOLDIER OF FORTUNE ADVERTISERS

POLICEWOMAN KILLED . . .

If you ask for trouble long enough, you usually get it. A policewoman was killed near SOF's offices this month. She had pulled a man over and was arresting him when he shot her. It's bad enough when an officer gets shot, but it's worse when policy makes it inevitable. To begin with, the killer was awaiting trial on a long list of crimes, some of them violent; if society doesn't have the fortitude to put criminals in the slammer, nobody should be surprised when they kill someone. Second, she was working alone because of budget cuts. Third, most women just can't handle physical struggles with men. The policewoman had tried to handcuff the killer.

MERCS BLOW ONE . . .

Nobody said that mercenaries were always bright. In New Orleans, trial has begun of Ku Klux Klan Grand Lizard (sorry, that's Wizard) Don Black and two other men charged with trying to overthrow Dominica.

In case you can't instantly remember what Dominica is, it is a former British colony, an island of 304 square miles in the West Indies, with a population of about 74,000. The capital is Roseau.

Among the equipment introduced by the prosecution as evidence were a Confederate flag and wire cutters. Reportedly the defendants also had guns and dynamite. Seven of their companions chose to cooperate with the government in exchange for leniency; among these was Michael Perdue of Houston, alleged to be the "mastermind" of the plot. Black and his two co-defendants chose to face trial and risk 50 years' imprisonment. It should give them time to think of something brighter to do when they get out.

GIs IN SINAI? . . .

Look for an international peacekeeping force in the Sinai Peninsula — but not a UN force. Secretary of State Alexander Haig recently said in Wellington, New Zealand, that he hopes to have an agreement on the international force shortly. It would serve as a buffer between the Israelis and the Egyptians when Israel finishes its withdrawal from Sinai, which it is scheduled to do next April.

The Reagan administration has said that the United States would provide up to half of the force, which is expected to consist of 2,000 men. "We are very anxious to have par-

ticipation in a modest way both by Australia and New Zealand," Haig told a news conference after a meeting of ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, U.S. treaty).

The Australians and New Zealanders had reservations about the idea, however, wondering whether their countries would be willing to take part in a force not under the auspices of the UN. The UN, aside from being as useful as udders on a crowbar in any practical matter, would not field such a force because the Soviets would be sure to veto.

The United States would not command the force, but it hasn't been decided who would. It could be good duty for anyone who likes sand.

U.S. ARMS TO CHINA . . .

Secretary of State Haig doesn't waste time on the foreign-policy front. In Peking he announced that the Reagan administration has decided to sell arms to Mainland China. We bet this will get their attention in Moscow.

The United States has gradually been increasing its trade with the Red Chinese, and has sold them equipment which can be used to support military operations, such as trucks. This will be the first time since 1949 that America has sold China arms that can kill. The chief of staff of the Chinese army will visit the United States to discuss what arms the Chinese want to buy. They are thought to be primarily interested in such things as anti-tank missiles for use on the Sino-Soviet border.

However, the sales are not expected to have an immediate effect on the current strategic balance. China has recently had to reduce its military budget because of a creaking economy, and so won't be able to buy large quantities of arms. Further, China is a backward nation and probably couldn't handle large quantities of sophisticated armament. Still, we're glad we don't have a billion hostile Chinese on *our* border.

DRAFT WITHOUT WOMEN . . .

The Supreme Court, breaking with long tradition, has done something sensible: The justices affirmed, by a six to three majority, that it is constitutional to draft men only. This is a major step in bringing back the draft because, until now, many congressmen have feared that women would have to be drafted along with men. Although the court said nothing about the use of female volunteers in combat, it seemed to imply that women can legally be excluded from combat.

The decision drew a great deal of screaming and hair-pulling from radical feminists, a sure sign that it was a good one. Most of them said that the court's action was a terrible blow to civil rights, a giant step into the Stone Age, and so on. The feminists' position is that they don't want any draft at all, but that if there is one, women should have the right to be drafted. In other words, they want the right to go to war, but want to make damned sure they never have to exercise the right.

MARINES FOUL UP . . .

HQ USMC has really stepped on it this time. In the May '81 SOF, we ran a story on Marine Recon by Fred Reed. The opening picture was a beautiful Marine photo of Recons in a rubber boat in a swamp, one of the nicest military pictures we have seen anywhere. Several readers wrote us, asking how they could get a copy of the picture.

We called Marine HQ to find out. They told us that the photo belongs to the Corps, but is in custody of J. Walter Thompson, an ad agency that does recruiting publicity for the Marines. Thompson says it isn't going to let anybody else have copies of the picture. The Marines in advertising — if anybody in advertising can be called a Marine — agree.

We don't see why men interested in the Corps shouldn't be allowed to have a copy of an unclassified photo, which, after all, is public property, at the whim of a bunch of Madison Avenue Marines. The Corps should be embarrassed by this one. If you want this picture, or just want to support those who do, write the Commandant of the Marine Corps, HQ, USMC, (Code MRM), Washington, DC 20380; or call the advertising department at (202) 694-1786. The man to talk to is Col. Ruffini. Enough pressure just might blast the photo loose.

ALL NORMAL IN UGANDA . . .

In Uganda, word is that government troops opened fire on a crowded Roman Catholic facility and managed to kill about 55 people. In some countries, things just don't get better. As nearly as anyone can tell, the troops thought that anti-government guerrillas might be hiding there. The theory seems to be that if you kill everybody you can find, you are bound to kill the enemy — unless he is somewhere else.

To make matters still rosier, Ugandan troops are said to be looting their own people. It makes you wonder why colonialism has such a bad name.

FLAK

Continued from page 6

PATCHING SOG ...

Sirs:

I find it impossible to resist writing this letter. Your June 1981 issue of *Soldier of Fortune* was the best yet. The patch on the cover — *spectacular.* Any way to receive one? Please let me know.

Sincerely,
Michael J. Doyle
Waukegan, Illinois

The patch is not available but you may order a SOG T-shirt from Special Operations Association, P.O. Box 366, Marina, CA 93933. — The Eds.

TRACKING TURKEYS ...

Sirs:

Many of us have wondered who planned the Iranian fiasco — and now I think we know at least one of them. Could it have been Franklin Joseph Camper? He was the "trainer-leader" of the 13 men arrested while conducting a survival training exercise close to the Florida Power Corp's nuclear plant at Crystal River. To think that a rancher, a sheriff and two turkey hunters were able to capture them strikes me as the most humorous, idiotic thing recently reported in the newspapers. The turkey hunters got a bunch of turkeys all right!

Can you imagine a sane person laying out $350 for a Chinese gang bang like that? Obviously, Camper's four years in Special Forces does not say much for the quality of soldier they are producing on "The Hill" these days. Only the most idiotic soldier would use a map that was 24 years old. I can see that Camper figured to make $4,200 on a boy-scout camp-out but he couldn't even make that work. No doubt he was in the latrine during E&E and never made it to O&I. I hope that aspiring "survivalists" learn a lesson from this. For $5 they can get more instruction by purchasing boy-scout merit-badge handbooks.

Sincerely,
C. Richardson
Melrose, Florida

CAMPER CAPER ...

Sirs:

Some time ago my son, Robert Lee Lisenby, answered an ad placed in your magazine by Franklin Joseph Camper. The ad was on survival training. I understand they got together by means

of letter writing and by phone. They decided to run a school in Florida on survival training. I believe a two-week course. They had a total of 13 men. While in training, the sheriff came in and arrested all of them for felonious trespass. All were released on bond. To date the cases haven't been heard. All were turned loose except my son and Mr. Camper.

Then in April my son and Mr. Camper were in Miami, Fla., driving down the street in a rented car. According to the AP report of the matter, someone tipped them off about the two, so once again they were arrested. My son was placed under a $250,000 bond and Mr. Camper was sent to his home state, also under arrest, as far as we know.

Why would anyone with Mr. Camper be arrested? He seems like a very fine young man and, according to my son Robert, is one of his best friends. Yet right now it seems like both face very stiff prison terms due to some informer. If anyone can shed any light on the matter, please write us: P.O. Box 142, Troy, NC 27371, or call us collect anytime: (919) 572-2049. I understand that both have lots of friends who read this magazine. Maybe someone could help out. Any and all help with this matter will be very much appreciated. Thanks to all.

Sincerely,
James T. Lisenby
Troy, North Carolina

ACCURACY IN MEDIA ...

Sirs:

Having just gotten back in country recently from some extended operations in the mountains outside of Kabul, I happened across an issue of your magazine. Excellent! Just the thing we've been needing for a long while. I only wish that my Afghanis could have brought me one from the village. Your articles are most interesting and, I'm pleased to say, factual. The time I spent in Indochina in the Army in '72 was recalled by your article on SOG ops ("SOG's Secret War," SOF, June '81). I was an S-3 for a while and your reporting is quite accurate. Keep up the good work.

Yours truly,
B.N.D.
Brookings, South Dakota

SOF BEST AT ANY PRICE ...

Sirs:

So my subscription renewal is going to be another buck — big deal! SOF is the best, most informative magazine; I read it from cover to cover each month and then pass it around among my Vietnam and WWII vet friends.

I am neither, having spent the Vietnam War in a hospital or on 4F status. I am now, however, what could best be described as a northern redneck getting long in the tooth like my army buddies, but with none of their memories, whether good or bad. I'm also a card-carrying, red-white-and-blue NRA gun nut.

So, although I have only served my country for a little while as a GS-15 artist for the USAF, I feel I have as legitimate a right to read and enjoy your fine magazine as anyone else — be they police officers, war vets or current professionals. That is one of the many advantages of being an American: the freedom of the press — and unless something drastic prevents protecting it, the right to bear arms.

Most sincerely yours,
Bruce E. Barkley
Yonkers, New York

UP TO BAT ...

Sirs:

With regard to your review of *BAT-21* (SOF, May '81), I wish to point out a couple of discrepancies which were overlooked (perhaps inadvertently) by Marv Wolf. Lt. Tom Norris, a Navy SEAL, is the individual who rescued Lt. Col. Hambleton. Norris received the Medal of Honor for this exploit. His actions in the rescue are a matter of public record. For some unknown reason (certainly not security), author Anderson gives Norris the *nom de guerre* of "Morris" in his book and makes him a "Marine Ranger" — a title which would leave most leathernecks scratching their heads. Additionally, it was an Army slick, not an Air Force chopper, which flew Hambleton out to the 95th Evacuation Hospital in Da Nang. Let's keep the record straight and give credit where due.

Sincerely,
Lt. Frank Brown, USN
Subic Bay, Philippines

UP IN THE AIR ...

Sirs:

The article concerning the SOF Convention jump (SOF, April '81) made reference to former members of the 12 Special Air Force Group. There is no 12 Special Air Force Group. The reference should have probably read the 12th Special Forces Group. How could you let the 12th SF Group be labeled as a zoomie outfit? You should weed out the legs on your staff!

Sincerely,
R.A. Lesmeister
Associate Editor,
American Firearms Industry News

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No. 1—SUMMER '75: U.S. Vietnam Vets Attempt To Fight For Saigon; CIA Assassination Of Trujillo; Col. Hoare & His Mercs in Angola.
No. 2—SPRING '76: War in Angola; Special Forces Desert Training; Cuban Invasion Plot.
No. 3—SUMMER '76: Hearst's PR Dept. Behind '54 Guatemalan Revolt; Mad Dog Callan: Merc Runs Amuck; Challenge of Deep Sea Diving.
No. 4—FALL '76: Vietnam Vet First American KIA in Angola; SOF Interviews CIC of Rhodesian Army; American Merc in Israel.
No. 5—WINTER '77: Ralph Thorsen: Modern Day Bounty Hunter; Terror in Beirut — An Inside Look At The PLO; SOF Interviews Sir Robert Thompson.
No. 6—SPRING '77: SOF Recon: Action in South Africa; NRA Survival School; Paramedics in Guatemala.
No. 7—SEPT. '77: American Merc Destroys Cuban Espionage Ring; SAC Errors in VN Airwar Operation, Part 1; Rhodesia: "Castle Keep."
No. 8—NOV. '77: South African Army Prepares for War; Israeli Defense Force; SOF Interviews Mike Echanis; SAC Errors in VN, Part 2.
No. 9—JAN. '78: Africa Is Burning; A Professional Soldier Evaluates CIA-Cuban Exile Ops; Freelancing in Cambodia.
No. 10—MARCH '78: Bounty Hunting in Africa; Tet '68: American Media Interpretations, Ranger in Action in Saigon; Grey's Scouts Ride Again.
No. 11—MAY '78: Mercs' Togo Assassination Try; Thai Army General Speaks Out; Cubans Torture U.S. POWs in Vietnam.
No. 12—JULY '78: French Foreign Legion Today, Part 1; H&K Assault Rifle; South African Commandos.
No. 13—SEPT. '78: French Foreign Legion Today, Part 2; SOF Interviews Cambodia's President-in-Exile; Mike Echanis: Hands vs. Guns.
No. 14—NOV. '78: French Foreign Legion Today, Part 3; ST-23 Fighting Knife; SWAT In Action; South African Strike Into Angola
No. 15—JAN. '79: Jeff Cooper's "Gunsite"; SOF Interviews Gen. John K. Singlaub; SOF Rides with Rhodesia's Armored Corps.
No. 16—FEB. '79: In Memoriam: Mike Echanis; Dynamite Combat Custom .45 Auto; French Foreign Legion Update.
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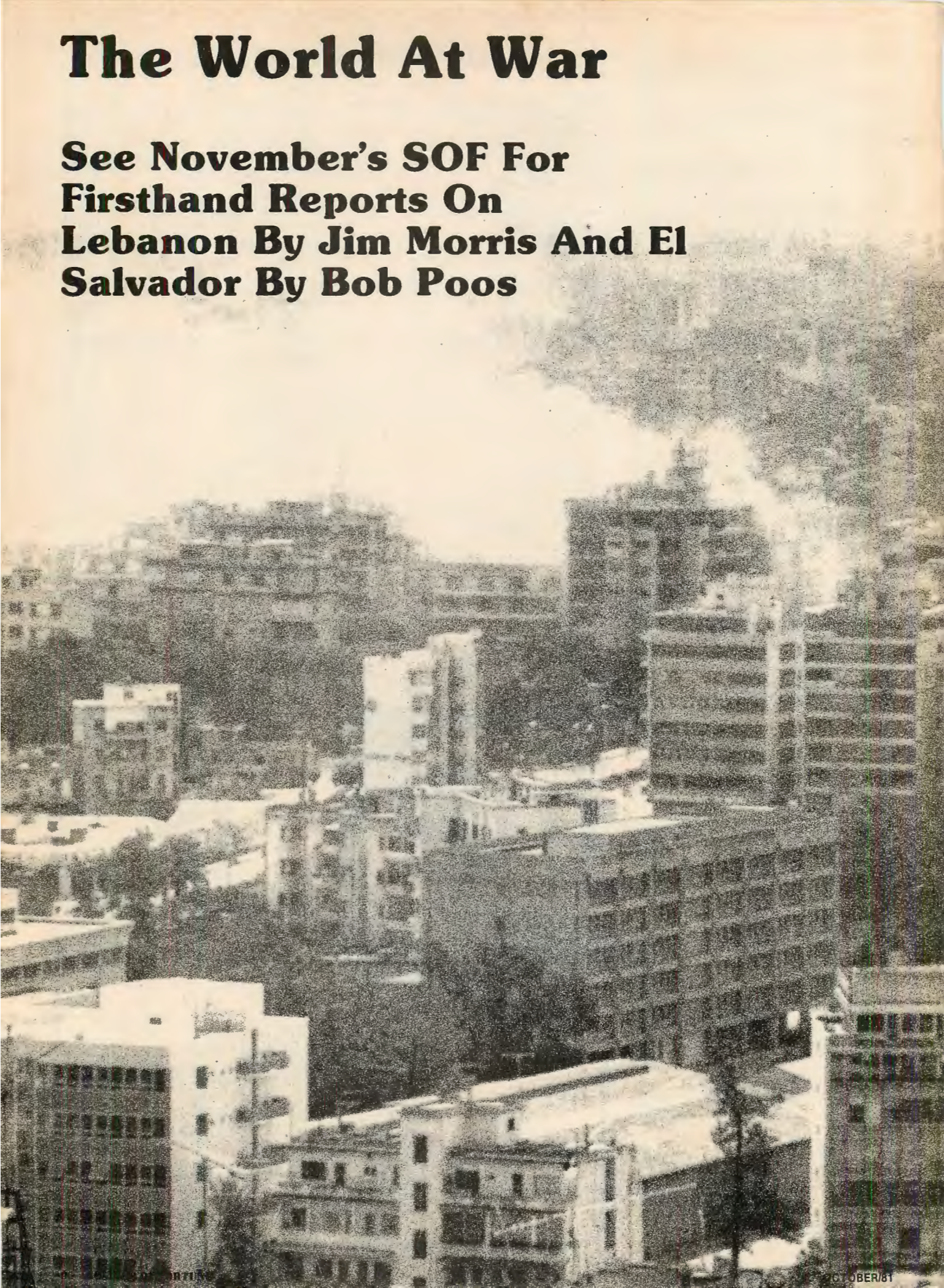

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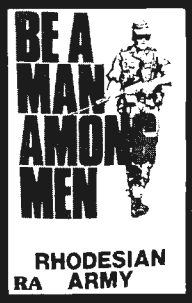

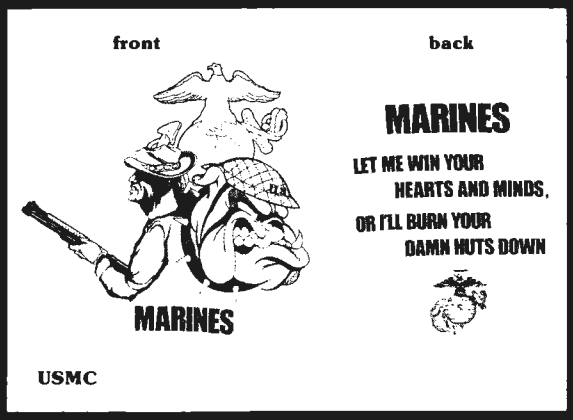

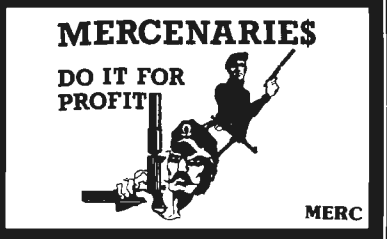

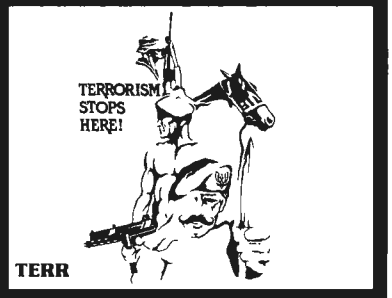

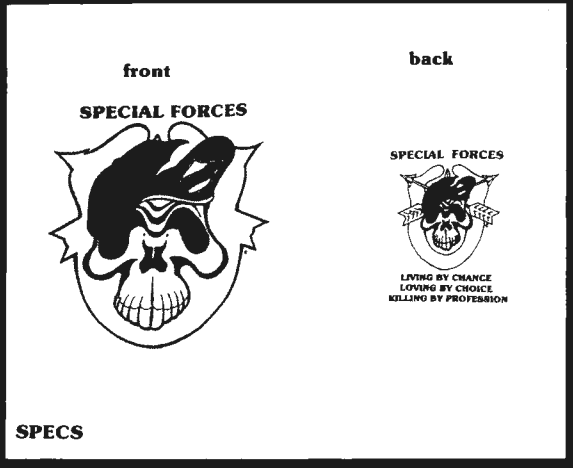

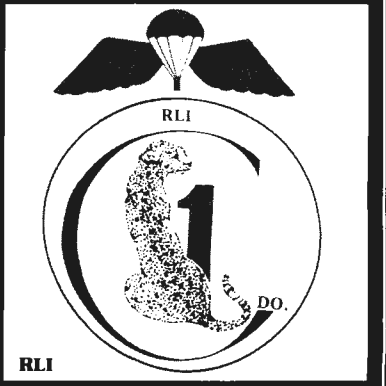

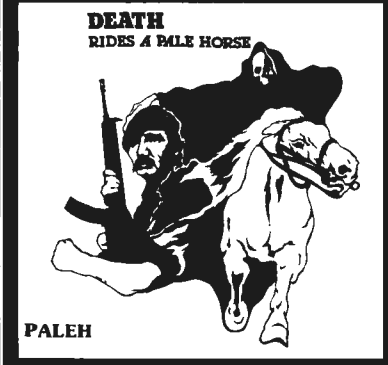

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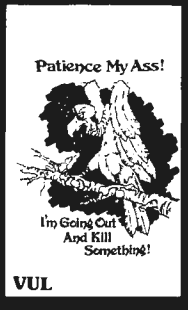

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This is the first time in over 35 years that the maker of the original, now famous, World War II Fairbairn-Sykes Fighting Knife has made this long-hilted, chequered-grip classic. This is *not* simply a reproduction but a *genuine* F-S Fighting Knife, reissued for this limited edition by the original maker, with rich, museum-quality embellishments and finish. It takes it's rightful place in the succession of historic edged weapons made in the Sword Works in London, England of the 209-year old Wilkinson Sword Limited.

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Only twenty-five hundred will be made worldwide for collectors, military historians, museums and soldiers, sailors airmen and marines of World War II and their families. Each knife will be individually numbered and registered with The American Historical Foundation. A luxurious, dark-green, velvet-lined and fitted, richly gold-tooled presentation case with brass closure clasps will accompany your knife. This is the most spectacular version ever issued of this Commando Knife; experts agree that these will be greatly sought after by collectors.

You will own a legacy of one of the proudest moments in American history, which can be passed along to future generations of your family to serve as a reminder to them of your interest in military history and quite possibly of your participation, or the participation of one of your relatives, in this heroic assault.

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The inscription in the foliate banner on the presentation side of the blade reads: "In Honor of the D-Day Invasion, Sixth of June, 1944." The insignia of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, representative of the victorious joint Allied effort under the command of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, crowns the shoulder of the blade.

On the reverse of the blade the Swordsmiths will etch in an elaborate banner General Eisenhower's famous pre-invasion command: "Accept Nothing Less Than Full Victory!" For the first time since the war, the wartime Wilkinson Sword crossed-sword trademark will be etched on the shoulder of the blade. This has been selected from the historic Wilkinson Sword pattern library in London especially for this issue.

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To accompany your knife and display case you will also receive an exact reproduction of the historic command letter signed by General Eisenhower and distributed to the troops of the invasion armada the night before D-Day. This and the numbered Certificate of Authenticity can be displayed with your knife.

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